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Daily Report
East Europe

FBIS-EEU-96-065 *3 April 1996*

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Albania: Parties Meet, Form 'Pole of Center'

AU0204201996 Tirana KOHA JONE in Albanian 2 Apr 96 p 3

[Resolution signed by Social Democratic Party Chairman Skender Gjinushi and Democratic Alliance President Neritan Ceka in Tirana on 1 April: "Pole of the Center Founded"]

[FBIS Translated Text] After a series of meetings between themselves and other organizations, the parties:

—bearing in mind the electoral and political situation in which our country finds itself on the threshold of the parliamentary elections;
—guided by the basic programs and common standpoints of our parties on fundamental issues and their positions in the Albanian and European political spectrum as parties of the center Left and center Right;
—on the basis of the analyses and decisions of the Social Democratic Party Second Congress and the Democratic Alliance Assembly;
—announce the creation of the Pole of the Center [Poli i Qendres] as an electoral and political group and an alternative government after the elections.

Its main aims are:

—to conduct the forthcoming elections in Albania without further tension and conflict, in order to guarantee before anything else the fair administration of the free votes of the people;
—to strengthen the center in the next parliament, to shatter its bipolarization, to relegate the Democratic Party to a minority, and to ensure that the parliament is not dominated by a single party.
—to achieve in the new parliament a balance of power that will guarantee the government of the country and unblock the political and judicial situation, especially as regards problems of the rule of law, the further progress of the economic reform, and the fast integration of Albania in European-Atlantic structures.

Its basic program includes:

—the establishment and consolidation of the rule of law by achieving a consensus on a constitution of European standard; the repeal of anticonstitutional laws passed by the Democratic Party; an end to totalitarian methods; and the implementation of a reform in the system of justice that will guarantee free and apolitical courts and will increase their professionalism; the establishment of order and calm; the creation of a capable and apolitical administration, and respect for the rights and freedoms of minorities.
—the establishment of a social market economy by continuing the economic reform fast and with a clear program; a struggle against corruption especially in its organized and legitimate forms; and a legal solution to the problems of privatization and the restitution of property;
—the fast and total integration of Albania in Europe on the basis of a national program for foreign policy and the Albanian problem.

The main activities of the Pole of the Center will be:

—cooperation and mutual support between the parties during the election campaign both in the first and second rounds and in the fielding of joint candidates in certain constituencies.
—possible joint government by the parties after the next elections;
—cooperation between their parliamentary groups both before and after the elections over all problems mentioned above in the basic program;
—coordination of the work of the editorial boards of the parties newspapers, also considering the issue of a joint newspaper during the election campaign;
—the conduct of joint political activities during the election campaign.

To achieve these objectives, the Pole of the Center:

—will seek the support of the entire Albanian electorate, which it calls upon not to fall into the traps of party-based clans, which are seeking to further exacerbate and bipolarize the situation, but to help to ensure that the elections are conducted normally, and that their votes are not falsified and rigged.
—will seek support especially from voters of the center, who amount to about 35 percent of the Albanian electorate, and to whom it on this occasion extends a message of thanks and understanding.
—will openly advocate electoral partnership with other parties of the center Left and center Right that are seeking to join this Pole and which recognize its platform; it will be ready to cooperate with any political force that supports this Pole's main aims.

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Bulgaria: Pavlov's Idea of Balkan Meeting Supported

AU0304092596 Sofia 24 CHASA in Bulgarian 3 Apr 96 p 9

[Article by Lyubomir Denov: "Pavlov Acted as Diplomat"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Dimitur Pavlov did not go to Tirana in vain. He agreed to participate in the southern Balkans defense ministers' meeting at the last moment, and coyly took advantage of the organizers' mistakes.

Pavlov certainly knew from the start that the Tirana meeting was doomed to fail before it began. The ostensibly slow and taciturn retired admiral sensed the vacuum created by the absence of the Greek defense minister and by the limited number of defense ministers invited to the conference, and took the opportunity to float his idea of holding a meeting of all the Balkan defense ministers in Sofia.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Perry was the first to greet the Bulgaria initiative. At the same time his support was tacit recognition of the failure of the U.S. idea for the Tirana forum. It was precisely Perry who had hinted to Albanian President Berisha to invite the defense ministers of Macedonia [the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia—FYROM], Greece, Turkey, and Bulgaria—the Balkans southern flank.

The American staged all this in order to bring Ankara and Athens to the negotiating table. However, the Greeks did not bite. They preferred to absorb the consequences of possible punitive action by Washington, while maintaining their positions in the dispute with Turkey.

The meeting in Tirana took place because of and despite the United States. One could not exclude the variant that with this meeting the Americans were seeking to outline their sphere of influence in the Balkans. On the other hand, the fact that Bulgaria and Greece were invited does not support the other theory, namely, that the meeting was intended to create an Islamic axis from Ankara to Tirana. Sofia and Athens have no place in such company, their presence could only be a disturbing factor. Albania is also a weak link in this chain. The Islam there does not have the power of Turkish Islam. There are only two or three mosques in Tirana and while the 3-million population is considered Muslim, it treats religious dogmas rather freely.

In Albania, Perry understood that every division of the Balkans engenders suspicion, and that Russia, as a superpower, should not be isolated from the peninsula's problems. The Russian influence in the Balkan Peninsula dates from a time before the United States even came into existence. Therefore, while expressing support for the meeting in Sofia in the fall, Perry made a point of stressing that the support is contingent on Russia's being invited, something Pavlov would have done anyway.

It appears that our minister and his team anticipated the situation in Tirana and worked out the idea of the Sofia meeting after consultations with almost all Balkan defense ministries. It is especially important that the rivals Athens and Ankara, the quarreling Athens and Skopje, and Belgrade and Tirana, which also have their problems, have all said "yes" to the proposed meeting in Sofia. Indeed, Albanian President Berisha's strange statement that stability in the peninsula is based on the United States, Italy, and Turkey should not surprise anyone. Had China participated in the meeting it would also have figured in Berisha's list.

Nevertheless, is the Sofia meeting necessary?

Supporters of the proposition that Balkan peace must be constructed on a bilateral basis certainly doubt the benefit of such a meeting. However, the quarrels in the "powder keg" of Europe never remain on a single level. They almost always break out of the circle of bilateral relations, like the quarrel between Greece and Macedonia, for example. Therefore collective political will is needed, as well as decisions to which all members of the Balkan family commit themselves.

Would the meeting of the Balkan foreign ministers in Sofia not render the meeting of the defense ministers meaningless? This question can be asked only by those who close their eyes to the huge weapons arsenals that have accumulated in the region with the Yugo-war. Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, and Turkey carried out their arms reduction in accordance with the Vienna treaty, but the former Yugoslav republics did not sign the treaty. It is absurd to think that they will join the treaty post factum, simply because there is no procedure for such a step.

Classic diplomacy does not count shells and muzzles. It is military diplomacy that settles those issues. It is no secret that in the last three or four years the generals in Sofia, Ankara, and Athens have far outstripped their colleagues from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

In the final analysis, the idea behind the Bulgarian initiative is that the military meeting will ease the way for the diplomatic one. Does anyone believe that the foreign ministers will be able to settle all the disputes in the peninsula?

Should Perry and Grachev come to Sofia? By all means, because peace in the Balkans stopped being a local issue

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a long time ago. The key role the two superpowers played in untangling Bosnia's knot is the best proof of that.

In Tirana, the defense ministers outlined a range of new confidence-building measures in the peninsula's military sphere. Some have already been activated on a bilateral basis. What could be better than reducing equipment and troops along the Balkan borders? Would the exchange of information among the Defense Ministries not reduce tension? Would the installation of "hot" lines between Athens and Ankara and Tirana and Belgrade not prevent clashes? Finally, joint maneuvers will strengthen mutual confidence.

The job of the generals is to fight. Nevertheless, is it not better to save bloodshed through talks? Wars can also be waged through peaceful means. Indeed, it is better to wage war through peaceful means than through fire and steel.

The appearance of the military in the Balkan diplomatic stage indicates that they are already burying the hatchet and smoking the peace pipe.

Bulgaria: Ministry Protests Exclusion From Neo-COCOM

AU0304094396 Sofia Khorizont Radio Network in Bulgarian 0900 GMT 3 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] On 3 April Panteley Karasimeonov, spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, issued a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in connection with the Vienna meeting of the states that participate in neo-COCOM, a new forum on controlling the trade in arms and dual purpose goods, which opened yesterday.

The declaration expresses the conviction that Bulgaria meets the criteria for participating in this forum, including its readiness to subject its arms exports to controls and its adherence to the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The declaration expresses displeasure that Bulgaria was not invited to the Vienna meeting and hopes that this mistake will be corrected as soon as possible.

The Vienna meeting is expected to become the neo-COCOM's constituent meeting.

Bulgaria: People's Union To Nominate Zhelev in Primaries

AU0204181196 Sofia Khorizont Radio Network in Bulgarian 1700 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The leadership of the People's Union coalition—of the Bulgarian National Agrarian Union and the Democratic Party—has officially informed President Zhelyu Zhelev that the coalition will nominate him as its candidate in the forthcoming presidential primaries that the opposition is holding to select a single candidate for the post of head of state. This happened at a special meeting held today, during which certain details were discussed connected with the need for the two candidates—Zhelyu Zhelev of the People's Union and Petur Stoyanov of the Union of Democratic Forces—to sign a political agreement regarding the primaries, as well as the need to seek guarantees that the opposition's primaries will be held in an atmosphere of tolerance.

Bulgaria: Cabinet Dilemma Over Nuclear Plant Viewed

AU0304080996 Sofia STANDART NEWS in Bulgarian 3 Apr 96 pp 1, 2

[Unattributed commentary: "The Future of the Second Nuclear Power Plant Is Under a Question Mark"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The argument "for" and "against" the construction of the Belene Nuclear Power Plant is about to flare up again and thus threaten to detonate the fragile social peace in the country, principally in Svishtov [a city on the Danube near the construction site].

Experts from the power supply system claim that it must be constructed; otherwise, in five years we will have to pay Romania dearly for electricity. On the other hand, ecologists think that electricity shortages and the growth in consumption in the energy strategy have been miscalculated.

Thus the cabinet again finds itself with tied hands: If it resumes the construction of Belene, it runs the risk of creating social tension in various parts of the country, but if it does not, the country could again face cold and dark winters and electricity shortages.

In addition, the $1 billion that has been invested so far in the construction will be lost for ever.

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Czech Republic: Potsdam Agreements Reaffirmed by Allies

96CH0063E Prague PRAGUE POST in English 27 Feb 96 p 3

[Article by Siegfried Mortkowitz: "Wartime Allies Stand Firm on Potsdam Agreements"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Big Three World War II Allies have entered a stormy debate on the expulsion of ethnic Germans from postwar Czechoslovakia by reaffirming the legal validity of decisions made at the 1945 Potsdam Conference.

German officials prompted the debate by questioning the validity of the agreements and saying that Germany had never accepted them. German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel earlier this year called the agreements not a legal recognition of the expulsions of 2.5 million ethnic Germans, but a political declaration.

The debate is part of an attempt to reach a Czech-German bilateral declaration ending disputes on issues such as compensation and property rights.

"The decisions made at Potsdam by the governments of the United States, United Kingdom, and the then-Soviet Union in July and August of 1945 were soundly based in international law. The conference conclusions have been endorsed many times since in various multilateral and bilateral contexts," said an official statement released by the U.S. Embassy on Feb. 14. The statement further said that "the conclusions of the Potsdam Conference are historical fact, and the United States is confident that no country wishes to call them into question."

An official German Foreign Ministry position, published in the Bonn newspaper GENERAL-ANZEIGER, said that Germany has never recognized the Potsdam declarations as justifying the postwar resettlement of Germans, and presented three reasons for not accepting the Potsdam declaration. These include the belief that the transfers were often not orderly, that "expulsions" violate the principle of self-determination as it is currently understood, and that agreements do not apply to states that have no part in making them. Germany was not a signatory to the Potsdam agreements.

Jeremy Cresswell, British ambassador to the Czech Republic, also stood by the legality of Potsdam's conclusions. And, in a prepared statement, the Russian Embassy said, "The Russian state considers the Potsdam Treaty to be an important international document which...settled the defeat of the fascist German regime and its Nazi ideology, and has served as a cornerstone of the postwar territorial arrangements and peace in Europe." The statement concluded by saying, "No attempts to interpret the agreement arbitrarily can lessen...its importance."

The Potsdam agreements have recently become the focus of discussions surrounding the negotiations for a German-Czech bilateral declaration to put an end to disputes arising out of World War II and its immediate aftermath. The main point of controversy is the forced resettlement of more than 2.5 million ethnic Germans from the territory of Czechoslovakia and the confiscation of their property on the basis of the so-called Benes decrees of 1945.

A chapter of a declaration signed on Aug. 2, 1945, at Potsdam stated that "the transfer to Germany of German populations...remaining in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary will have to be undertaken." The declaration went on to say that "any transfers that take place should be effected in an orderly and humane manner."

The Czech Foreign Ministry also considers the agreements of the Potsdam Conference to be legally binding. "The recent statements of the three Potsdam powers only confirmed what we've always believed," said Karel Boruvka, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry. "For us, it was always clear that the Potsdam agreements were and are legally binding."

Miroslav Potocny, the head of Charles University's department of international law, called the German challenge to the Potsdam agreements "totally unacceptable." They were, he said, a consequence of Germany's unconditional surrender after World War II. "As a result of this unconditional surrender," Potocny said, "the German state and its government did not exist. In surrendering, it had ceded its internal and external sovereignty to the victorious powers."

Potocny emphasized that this transfer of sovereignty was the basis of Germany's capitulation. "As a result," he said, the three signatories to the agreements were negotiating and acting in Germany's name, "for a period of time and under special conditions, to turn Germany into a democratic land."

The aim of this "contract," Potocny said, was to prevent future German aggression, and its measures "resulted from the unfortunate events of 1938 (the Munich treaty and the resulting German occupation of Czechoslovakia). It was necessary to adopt such measures to ensure that this could never be repeated. (Therefore), you cannot apply today's norms to this specific context."

He added that the Potsdam agreements were "a closed legal system that cannot be revised or abolished bilaterally. All parties—not only the signatories,

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but also the third states involved (Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia)—would have to agree to any revision."

Czech Republic: Amendment to Anti-Drug Law Criticized

96CH0063A Prague PRAGUE POST in English 27 Feb 96 pp 1, 3

[Article by Kathleen Knox: "Politicians Make Hay Over Bill to Criminalize Drugs for Personal Use"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Parliamentary deputies have given their first approval to a change in drug legislation which, opponents charge, proved they had succumbed to the headiest narcotic of all—the whiff of a surefire vote-getter.

Flying in the face of cabinet disapproval and objections from drug-abuse counselors, Parliament voted Feb. 13 to accept for further discussion a coalition deputy's bill that would attach penalties to possession of drugs for personal use, which is currently legal in the Czech Republic.

The bill, put forward by Christian Democratic Union-Czech People's Party (KDU-CSL) deputy Pavel Severa, would provide for sentences of up to three years in jail for anyone caught carrying drugs. Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus, speaking after the cabinet rejected the proposal Jan. 24, objected that it made "occasional use and possession as punishable as distribution."

And on his regular Sunday radio broadcast, "Talks from Lany," President Vaclav Havel condemned the bill as "completely counterproductive." What is needed are harsher and more effective measures against drug traffickers, he said.

During the bill's first parliamentary reading, a few renegade members of Klaus' Civic Democratic Party (ODS) joined deputies from the People's Party and its other coalition partner, the Civil Democratic Alliance (ODA), in supporting the bill. A majority of opposition deputies also gave the thumbs up to the amendment. It must be submitted for a second and third reading before it is finalized.

Petra Buzkova, deputy chairwoman of the main opposition Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD) and a proponent of setting legal limits on drug possession, said it was more a case of deputies—including some of her own CSSD colleagues—putting on their smartest election clothes to parade in front of voters.

"A large number of political parties so soon before the elections are thinking up populist proposals like there's some production line, just to appeal to voters," she said. "I'm convinced this bill is from that same factory."

Severa dismissed suggestions that his bill was designed simply as an election vote-winner. And Emil Jaros, an ODS deputy known for his strident anti-smoking and anti-drug views, said it was time the country adopted more restrictive drug laws.

Jaros said occasional users wouldn't face the maximum three-year sentence set down in the bill. Instead, he said, they would probably receive a fine or alternative punishment.

"It's very difficult for police to judge, on their first contact with someone, whether they are carrying drugs for their personal use, or whether they are actually a dealer," Jaros said. "This decision should be up to the court."

Currently, the law does not state what is considered to be a reasonable amount for personal use and what is enough to constitute dealing. Jaros said even setting amounts would not solve the problem, since dealers "would just have the legal amount on them and then keep running back and forth to their supply."

Buzkova objected to what she said were discrepancies in the logic of the bill's authors.

"They spoke about alternative punishments, but the only viable one in this case is a fine," she said. "Many addicts don't have a regular income, so judges won't have any choice but to sentence these people to jail terms of one to three years. It's complete nonsense."

"It would mean that addicts' families, apart from having the problem of getting their nearest and dearest off drugs, will be scared that their relatives will be sent to jail."

Above the cacophony of electioneering charges, however, the occasional voice could be heard expressing what sounded like real concern about a social problem:

"My 14-year old daughter told me she's the only one in her class who doesn't smoke and doesn't do drugs," CSSD deputy Jiri Vyvadil said during the debate. "It was alarming for me to hear her say, at 14 years of age, that all her classmates are taking drugs."

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Slovakia: Government Daily Criticizes Christopher's Remarks

AU0204120596 Bratislava SLOVENSKA REPUBLIKA in Slovak 30 Mar 96 pp 8, 9

[Commentary by Viliam Fabry: "After Vienna, Brussels? On the Margin of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's Recent Statement"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Here it is, I told myself on 20 March when I learned from Czech Television what U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said at the meeting of ministers of foreign affairs of former communist states in Prague. Speaking about future European security and NATO's enlargement eastwards, he stressed, among other things—as Czech Television conveyed it—that NATO would help settle disputes between states, for example between Slovakia and Hungary.

Revision Is at Issue

Now I understand why Hungary is in such a hurry to get into NATO first and why it sets such store by the current presence of NATO troops in southern Hungary, which Hungarian historian Erno Raffay, for example, state secretary at the Ministry of Defense under Antall's government and an inveterate opponent of the Trianon Peace Treaty, would like the Hungarian Government to use to alert U.S. diplomats' attention to the "pitiful fate of Hungarians beyond the borders and to talk them into their revision." One could not perhaps express this more boldly.

It seems that this is what happened. It was surely by no coincidence that Warren Christopher mentioned problems between Slovakia and Hungary, though I believe that he would have ingratiated himself more with the Czech Republic, which hosted the meeting, by mentioning NATO's offer to deal with the property claims and indemnification of the 3-million-minority of Sudeten Germans and with the indemnification of the Czech (and Slovak) victims of Nazism. I must also say, however, that the generous offer and the prospect of NATO exerting its influence pale somewhat when we realize the inability of this organization to solve the problem of Cyprus, which involves two of its member countries—Greece and Turkey. A problem that can calmly be called "casus belli" [Latin term meaning an event or action that justifies war or conflict] because there has already been a war over this island and because the dispute, lasting 22 years, started at the time of both states' membership of that organization.

Pressure—Role of the West

Warren Christopher's words will be easier to understand when viewed through the prism of statements by Csaba Tabajdi, political state secretary at the Hungarian Government Office, who, in a MAGYAR NEMZET article last August, said, among other things, that, in the Hungarian Republic's dispute regarding the Hungarian minorities' position in the neighboring states, "the West is playing a certain role of pressure...."

It seems that this is already happening. It is thus to be expected that, following the ratification of the treaty between the Slovak Republic and the Hungarian Republic, if our government will not insist on consistent reciprocity in the implementation of individual bilateral commitments, the Hungarian Government's demands and interventions in our internal affairs will only escalate. And because it is impossible to add anything to the rights of Hungarians in Slovakia, because these are disproportionately greater than the rights of Slovaks in Hungary, it is also to be expected that Budapest, with substantial support from representatives of Hungarian political parties in the Slovak Republic, will appeal to international organizations, including, possibly, NATO, when both our states become its members.

History Warns

We can thus expect that, in the same way as the Sudeten German issue and the secession of southern Slovakia and its annexation to Hungary were resolved in 1938 (at international level) in Munich and Vienna, we will also live to see NATO dealing in Brussels with problems between Slovakia and Hungary. Warren Christopher indicated this fairly clearly a few days ago. It is only a pity that one could not hear any comment on this part of Christopher's speech from either Minister of Foreign Affairs Juraj Schenk or any other Slovak Government representative.

Slovakia: NATO Entry, Repercussions of Penal Code Viewed

AU0204153196 Prague MLADA FRONTA DNES in Czech 28 Mar 96 p 12

[Commentary by Lubos Palata and Karol Wolf: "A Slovak Amendment Against Democracy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Slovakia has taken another major step away from democracy. The amendment to the Penal Code, as if copied from the communist era, does not recognize even the mildest criteria of the free world's legislation and, given the legal marasmus prevailing today in Bratislava, may easily be misused to persecute the political opponents of Meciar's ruling team as it allows people to be imprisoned for writing

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in newspapers or for organizing "anti-state" demonstrations.

The amendment was supposed to be the price for which the treaty with Hungary was approved in parliament by the nationalistic Slovak National Party. This price is far too high and unacceptable.

Moreover, the ruling deputies even adopted a supplementary resolution for the treaty with Hungary that curbs minority rights. It negates virtually all of the positive influence that the agreement could have had.

So, the treaty has been ratified formally, but the Slovak parliament has in fact rejected it in the form in which it was concluded a year ago. This, obviously, will force Budapest into a corresponding reaction. The whole raison d'etre for the treaty—that is, calming the situation surrounding the Hungarian minority in Slovakia—is thus disappearing.

A major test lies in store for Slovak democracy because of the adoption of the amendment to the Penal Code. Now, how effective its last safety valves in Bratislava are—the president and the Constitutional Court—will be exposed glaringly. The international public and representatives of democratic countries—first and foremost, those for whom developments in Bratislava are of consequence, including the Czech Republic—should also now make themselves heard.

At the same time, what is happening in Slovakia has an effect on the whole region and also on the matter as crucial for our country as the enlargement of the North Atlantic Alliance. The approval of the inter-state treaty should open the doors to NATO for both Bratislava and Budapest. The method and circumstances under which it was done, however, have slammed these doors hard shut both for the Slovaks and, unfortunately, for the Hungarians, too.

Slovakia: Military Talks With Ukraine Defense Chiefs Begin

LD0204193096 Bratislava Rozhlasova Stanica Slovensko Network in Slovak 1600 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Ukraine Defense Minister Valeriy Nikolayevich Shmarov has arrived for an official visit to the Slovak Republic at the invitation of his departmental colleague Jan Sitek. The talks of the two military delegations started shortly before 1600. Editor Miroslav Minar reports:

[Minar] [passage omitted] The soldiers of the two armies should meet this year at 18 joint actions. The biggest one should be the international exercise Shield of Peace [Stit mieru] which, within Partnership for Peace, will take place near the Ukrainian to[illegible]f Lvov from 1 to 10 June. The Army of the Slova[illegible]epublic should send one platoon from the rapid deployment battalion to this exercise.

Defense ministers Jan Sitek and Valeriy Shmarov noted that border cooperation of members of the 2d Army Corps in Presov and the 128th Division in Mukacevo is developing relatively well. There are frequent contacts between the air force, anti-aircraft defense, and military cartography experts. Cooperation in the sphere of aircraft technology repairs is invaluable.

At the moment a news conference is under way at the Ministry of Defense. In connection with the European integration process and the attempts of Slovakia to join the transatlantic security structures, the Ukrainian defense minister said that each state itself determines its security and that is why Ukraine does not deny this right to Slovakia. [passage omitted]

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Hungary: Employees of IFOR Base Form Trade Union

LD0304132296 Budapest Kossuth Radio Network in Hungarian 1000 GMT 3 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hungarian employees working for the U.S. IFOR base in Hungary have formed a trade union. Zsoka Nagy reports from Kaposvar.

[Nagy] This morning, Jozsef Swajda, county branch chairman of the National Federation of Hungarian Trade Unions [MSZOSZ], told the Chronicle program that this is the first occasion that they did not encourage employees to form a trade union, because they did not know whether employees could expect retaliation—and what kind of retaliation—for this.

Representing more than 300 Hungarian employees, the participants at the meeting insisted on their original position. Therefore, the MSZOSZ will give full support for the registration and operation of their trade union.

The employees decided to form a trade union because they considered their employers to be unpredictable and their working conditions uncertain. Labor contracts do not include wages, contracts are being extended month by month, and working schedules are also frequently altered.

Hungary: Parties View Duma's Decision on USSR

AU0204105396 Budapest UJ MAGYARORSZAG in Hungarian 30 Mar 96 p 3

[Report by unidentified correspondent: "Warning Signal for Our Continent"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At the initiative of the Communists, the Russian Duma decided to annul the decree on the elimination of the Soviet Union. UJ MAGYARORSZAG asked the opinion of the Hungarian parliamentary parties on this decision.

Laszlo Varga, deputy chairman of the Christian Democratic People's Party:

This decision of the Russian Duma originated from the irresponsible emotions of the most extremist elements. The 70-year dictatorship left deep traces in the thinking and morals of Russian society. The "erosion" of these traces will probably take decades. However, the intention to restore the Soviet Union not only gives a bad feeling to the Russian democrats, but also makes the countries that escaped from the former red empire and regained their independence as well as the former allies shudder, even if the aforementioned decision does not have any effect. I think this is also a warning to the West and makes those who put together aid programs for Russia think because, without them, it is impossible to make the limping democratic processes lasting and to revive the economies of the CIS countries. If the Russian Communists made this stirring decision out of considerations for the presidential campaign, the world must show more firmly in the coming months what kind of a regime it would like in Russia by supporting the democrats there.

Andras Kelemen, deputy chairman of the Hungarian Democratic Forum in charge of foreign policy issues:

For people with a healthy sense of reality, it seems that there is a serious lack of a sense of reality here. Nostalgia for the former Soviet Union is partly understandable among the population and representatives living in the central part of an empire, people who enjoyed certain advantages. On the other hand, we know well that the changes in Eastern Europe culminated in disappointment everywhere. These societies envisaged the process of change to be much faster, less painful, and more efficient. And there were people who promised that too. Seeing the events in Russia, we are now witnessing the concentrated impacts of the ensuing frustration. One should thoroughly examine the weight of an empire even if it is considerably broken: the country has now been accepted in the Council of Europe, a country that, with its citizens, or rather subjects, is currently in an armed conflict in Chechnya, for example. I think this is a rather shocking situation. Therefore, even if one cannot take seriously the Duma decision legally, one must definitely interpret it as a threatening message politically.

Nandor Rott, Independent Smallholders' Party [FKGP]:

The FKGP has not yet formulated its opinion, but my private opinion reflects the party's stand on this issue. The efforts of some political forces in the Russian Duma to restore the former Soviet Union do not threaten Hungary's independence; however, the extent to which Russia's attitude affects our NATO membership and integration is another matter. I regard as out of question that the European states would integrate us into their circle without Russia's agreement.

Besides, the Duma decision clearly shows that the internal power balance has not yet emerged on the territory of the former Soviet Union, and power lines "have not yet gotten into place." The efforts of certain sovereign states for independence fluctuate between the power area of the CIS and Russia's weight, without the emergence of final formal solutions. There are still open seams at the Baltic states, seams that connect the independent Baltic states to the former empire. The same applies to the "Islamic states" in the south of the former Soviet Union. Naturally, as the only big power in the area, Russia is interested in asserting its big-power

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influence; however, its means seems to be undeveloped. One should not forget that not even the balance between the big powers seems to be developed.

Matyas Eorsi, Alliance of Free Democrats, chairman of the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee:

It is not accidental that the distance from Moscow determines the strength of the international reaction elicited by the Duma decision. In my opinion, we should not overreact to this decision, a decision that has no legal consequence whatsoever. It is obvious that the Duma deputies "only" intended their decision as a gesture; nevertheless, this decision expresses their stand regarding the restructuring processes as well as certain Moscow politicians' desire to restore the Soviet Union. However, they lack a system of means to achieve this, because Russia is not in a situation to be able to force its ideas on anyone, and the Chechen example proves this well. At the same time, if this decision were aimed at expanding the Russian scope, it could also have a boomerang effect. Influential NATO circles suggest that this Duma decision was the last drop in the glass.

Zsolt Nemeth, Federation of Young Democrats:

Intimidation and threats belong to the traditional means of Russian foreign policy. Nobody should be fooled by the fact that Yeltsin distances himself from the Duma; in reality, he did not want to deal with the process that led to the Duma decision. It is also a foreign political game that government officials in stable power condition present themselves as figures in uncertain positions.

This power strategy calls the former successor states "close foreign countries." The Baltic states and Ukraine are threatened the most, as they are directly threatened by empire restoration. The situation of "buffer zone countries," including Hungary, is less precarious, but we are also affected by such a manifestation, a manifestation that, in my view, should be condemned by all means. However, one must take into consideration the fact that this decision cannot change our foreign policy toward Russia. Irrespective of all this, we must pay greater attention to our cooperation with the Baltic states, by stressing the Baltic countries' need for integration. We should also urge the European structures to pay particular attention to Ukraine, a country that supports the integration efforts and, in a given context, NATO should create "strategic partnership" relations with Ukraine.

Gyula Molnar, head of the foreign affairs working group of the Hungarian Socialist Party:

The Duma plays a special role in Russia. We must take into consideration the fact that there is a presidential power in Russia, so we do not have to treat this decision as if it were a concept that can be implemented in a short time. After getting into power in the Duma, the Communist Party was unable to make serious decisions, so the decision on making the elimination of the Soviet Union null and void can be interpreted as some kind of a "supplementary action." Nor should we forget the fact that there will be presidential elections in Russia this summer. In big powers, around presidential elections, statements and declarations often emerge that are "foreign political" in their nature, but they aim at domestic public opinion rather than at the international public opinion. I think that numerous such declarations will be made in Russia in the coming period. Although concern for the Russian democracy is legitimate, the aforementioned decision is not irreversible, so one should not sound the alarm bells.

Tamas Katona, foreign policy expert of the Hungarian Democratic People's Party:

In connection with the Duma decision, I think that this is similar to when the Slovak Parliament added commentaries to the Hungarian-Slovak basic treaty after its signing. Such things are as unacceptable in international law as the Moscow decision on reviving the Soviet Union, one that also wants to influence, interpret, and reshape a signed and accepted treaty. However, although such a step is definitely unacceptable from a legal viewpoint and it has no practical consequences whatsoever, it can be interpreted as a message of very bad taste. It is alarming to see the large number of people who think that the Soviet Union should be revived; moreover, they say that the very elimination of the Soviet Union was a wrong step. Aware of this threatening message, we can be happy that there is a very serious state body between Russia and Hungary, the 50-million-strong Ukraine, a country that does not intend to give up its hard-won independence.

Hungary: Seminar Criticizes Slovak Nationalism

AU0204162596 Budapest NEPSZABADSAG in Hungarian 2 Apr 96 p 3

[Article by "M.L.L.:" "The Slovak Government Was Criticized at a Budapest Seminar"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A kind of ethno-paranoia characterizes the current Slovak Government, which resulted in a series of discriminative laws that threaten the whole democracy in Slovakia, regardless of nationalities. This was said at the seminar organized by the Budapest office of the UN High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR] with the participation of Peter Huncik representing the Sandor Marai Foundation, and John Young, representa-

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tive of the UNHCR's Bratislava office, on the situation in Slovakia.

In his lecture, Huncik pointed out that this certain ethno-paranoia is also present in other places where different nationalities live in the same country, but this is usually present at the periphery of society. However, in Slovakia and Romania, the center represents this; this is a governing principle. As a result, the Hungarian minority has become socially and politically isolated, and the Slovak opposition cannot or does not want to turn to the Hungarian minority with a positive message, either, therefore, no such political tendency exists which would say that this is your home, too, this is where you are at home, and you should feel at home.

It is an actual success of Prime Minister Meciar's politics that homogeneous Slovak and Hungarian societies are living side by side in the country—no passage exists between them. A proof of this is the fact that none of the Slovak politicians were willing to vote against the language law.

In Huncik's view, in the course of privatization, the Meciar government created a dependency system through which he can also control the already privatized companies, and he pays the political price for this situation with nationalism. He also explained that, on the basis of scientific assessments, the verifiable conflicts are not rooted in history but they can be traced back to the current economic and social conditions. He suggested that the mass media in Hungary, including the Duna Television, should provide an alternative program for the Slovaks who speak both languages, as is already done by the private Czech station Nova, and they should later provide Slovak and Romanian subtitles for their programs.

Young mainly called the amendments of the penal code, which protect the state, dangerous, pointing out that this was the sweetener with which it was possible to make the opposition swallow the bitter pill of the basic treaty, and he recalled that, even for the Slovak opposition, foreign forums are often the only place where they can explain their ideas. The law also punishes this.

Hungary: Privatization Minister Withdraws Resignation

LD0204205896 Budapest Kossuth Radio Network in Hungarian 2000 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We have just received the news that [Privatization Minister] Tamas Suchman has announced that he will remain member of the Hungarian Socialist Party [HSP] after all.

The privatization minister, who announced his intention to resign at the HSP congress on Sunday, now says in a statement that at the time he was driven by strong emotions. But now several party members have convinced him that his behavior was hasty. A discussion with Party Chairman and Prime Minister Gyula Horn has also contributed to his decision to remain a member of the HSP and its parliamentary group, thus he is withdrawing his resignation statement, Tamas Suchman announced.

Hungary: New Smallholder Movement Holds Opening Rally

AU0204094296 Budapest NEPSZABADSAG in Hungarian 1 Apr 96 p 4

[Report by unidentified correspondent in Szeged: "New Smallholder Opening Meeting"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Federation of Hungarian Smallholders, which was formed a year ago by people who had either been expelled from the Independent Smallholders Party [FKGP] or had left it at some time in the past, held its opening rally in Zsombo, Csongrad county on 30 March. Jeno Gerbovits, national chairman of the federation, said that they would like to set up a movement with honest politics, organized from below, and it would prepare for the next elections by setting up a political workshop. They would like to shake people out of their apathy.

Talking about [FKGP Chairman] Jozsef Torgyan, Gerbovits said that Torgyan is unsuitable for leading the party and especially for leading the country. In his view, an increasing number of people are getting fed up with political clowning.

Hungary: MSZP Executive Deputy Chairman Views Role

AU0204131396 Budapest NEPSZABADSAG in Hungarian 2 Apr 96 p 4

[Article by Imre Bednarik: "Mrs. Kosa: The Title Deputy Chairperson Does Not Cover the Task"]

[FBIS Translated Text] I have no bad feelings at all that the congress elected me executive deputy chairperson rather than [general] deputy chairperson, Mrs. Magda Kovacs Kosa, the Hungarian Socialist Party's [MSZP] second person, told NEPSZABADSAG. According to her, the party cannot form its image in opposition to the government which is struggling with unpopular tasks.

Mrs. Kosa emphasized that the title executive deputy chairperson does not fully reflect her task because the congress accepted the full content of the [general]

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deputy chairperson position. In her view, the delegates decided to keep the old title because the position of general deputy chairman does not have any tradition in the MSZP.

Mrs. Kosa confirmed that she maintains that a party cannot have two images. The executive committee, which has bigger responsibility and more tasks than before, has to keep in touch with the government's socialist ministers and the party's parliamentary group, but this cannot mean that the party leadership can turn into a second power center. The executive committee cannot form its political image in opposition to a government which is struggling with many unpopular tasks; this has never been successful in history. The party leadership has to help the government such a way that its decisions should ultimately lead to a jointly created image of the future. According to Mrs. Kosa, the party organizations now require more impulses from the government than before. The party leadership can be a mediator in fulfilling this need, she emphasized. It cannot cause any tensions that she was previously a government member. She recalled that when she left her position, she said that she would not turn her back on politics and that she hoped that some kind of task would find her.

In her view, the MSZP still needs the human and political attributes of the former national committee chairman, Ivan Vitanyi. She expressed her hope that [Privatization Minister] Tamas Suchman would also soon clarify his relationship with his local party organization and with the party's parliamentary group. Gyula Horn himself confirmed that he still expects to use Suchman's expert knowledge, Mrs. Kosa said.

Hungary: MSZP's Left-Wing Faction on March Congress

96CH0044A Budapest MAGYAR NEMZET in Hungarian 13 Jan 96 p 5

[Unattributed article: "Actually, Whose Party Is the MSZP?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] As we have already reported, the MSZP's [Hungarian Socialist Party's] Left-Wing Faction—which is urging sweeping changes in the party's executive committee in the interest of asserting left-wing values more clearly than at present—met for a debate last weekend. The faction believes that, unless there is a significant change at the party congress this spring, the MSZP will be preparing its own political defeat in 1998. It was said at the meeting that one of the important tasks of the March congress would be to get rid of Finance Minister Lajos Bokros. The faction would also like to see Laszlo Mate withdraw from the party's leadership. He is one of the MSZP's deputy chairmen and is said to be "a multibillionaire."

How do prominent members of the MSZP feel about this? Mrs. Istvan Szollosi had attended the Left-Wing Faction's very first meeting in Hajos, and we caught up with the MP in her Bekes Megye election district. Her reply to our question was as follows: "As I have already said repeatedly, it is all the same to me who the finance minister is. But nobody should regard himself so wise as to say that there is no alternative to this economic policy. It is not even an economic policy, merely the old, proven system of debt management." Mrs. Szollosi pointed out that the present fiscal administration is giving top priority to debt management, and all the others can share whatever is left. The MSZP MP said that the country's internal national debt had been 900 billion forints [Ft] when Miklos Nemeth resigned; it had increased to Ft3,000 billion during the four-year rule of the MDF [Hungarian Democratic Forum] and was already Ft5,000 billion at present. In other words, the internal national debt is rising aggressively, due to the legalization of market rates of interest. "The approximately Ft400 billion of surplus proceeds from privatization do not amount to even a tenth of the internal national debt. In my opinion, therefore, this is only a drop in the bucket! That, of course, would come in handy for some people. But the questions my constituents are asking me in the Bekes district are: When will there finally be jobs? And how long will it be necessary to loiter for unemployment compensation, which will run out in February anyhow?" Mrs. Szollosi believes that the surplus proceeds from privatization would be perfectly suitable for infrastructure investments and job creation. Why, in Bekes Megye there are settlements were the unemployment rate is above 30 percent. "The Left-Wing Faction had been right on target when it said that the basic principles of privatization, and its concept, should have been laid down long ago, but perhaps it is not too late to do that even now. Bokros's person is not the issue. And Laszlo Mate has already announced he would not run for reelection to his present post. It is not worth demanding his resignation," the MP felt.

Next, we interviewed Sandor Nagy, the former chairman of the MSZOSZ [National Federation of Hungarian Trade Unions]. Replying to our question, he said: "It is all the same to me who holds the individual portfolios. But it is not at all the same what kind of policies the government is pursuing. The specific individual becomes questionable when not the entire cabinet shapes its collective standpoints. The important question is whether guarantees exist to ensure that one person cannot make decisions in opposition to the cabinet as a body. The issue of surplus proceeds

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from privatization raises the question of how was it possible to circumvent in this matter the cabinet and the parliamentary group? After all, the group's MP's were debating topics far less significant than this issue." If we take the cabinet's constitutional rights and obligations seriously, Sandor Nagy pointed out, no cabinet member can be absolved of responsibility for a policy line that the government adopts. "Whether one agrees with the finance minister or not, it would be a grave mistake to lay all the responsibility solely on his shoulders. The entire cabinet is responsible," Sandor Nagy contends.

The way Sandor Nagy sees it, the March congress of the MSZP will have to devote serious attention to what a large proportion of the Socialist Party's members and the general public think of the present practice, of how the party's program has changed, and of the extent to which the changes have been objectively warranted. The congress will have to identify also the problems that have not yet surfaced. It would not be good if the congress neglected to do all this, if it remained the customary organized event, ending with the conclusion that "we must strive to do everything a bit better."

Sandor Nagy agrees with the Left-Wing Faction's idea that new delegates ought to be elected for March, but not with its reason for new elections. (The faction feels that new delegates have to be elected because between 30 and 50 percent of the present delegates are proprietors.) The MP declared: "For a government that is building a market economy, it would be dangerous to regard proprietorship as the main criterion." However, a delegate's mandate is not entailed. Therefore, it would be a good idea to elect a new slate of delegates. The most important issue, in Nagy's view, is whether the party is actually paying attention to those strata to which it promised to do so, in its election program. "I fully understand the Left-Wing Faction's disappointment after the Miskolc congress because a shift to the left failed to occur. I personally did not expect Miskolc to produce a shift, because I did not see any indications of, or prospects for, a shift. But I would welcome if the MSZP were to confront the policies it has been pursuing, with the ones with which it identified itself. The basic question is: Actually whose party is the MSZP? That is what has to be clarified. It is not blasphemy to call a self-proclaimed leftist party to account for its leftism. The person who raises this question is not the one who owes explanations," Sandor Nagy told our reporter.

Hungary: Head of MSZP's Left-Wing Faction Interviewed

96CH0044A Budapest MAGYAR NEMZET in Hungarian 13 Jan 96 p 13

[Interview with Sandor Balogh, National Assembly member and chairman of the MSZP's Left-Wing Faction, by Tibor Moldovanyi; place and date not given: "A Narrower Gap Between the Rich and Poor"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A week ago, the MSZP's [Hungarian Socialist Party's] left-wing platform [faction] sharply criticized the government. The speeches at the platform's national conference have caused quite a stir. Demands were voiced for, among other things, Lajos Bokros's removal, and abandoning the government's present economic policy, because otherwise the party would lose the next elections.

We interviewed Sandor Balogh, the chairman of the Left-Wing Faction, about the objectives of the platform he is heading, and about its place within the Socialist Party.

[Moldovanyi] Would you ever have believed that, 18 months after the MSZP's election victory, the platform would claim that the policies of the Socialist-Liberal government were leading to social and cultural decline?

[Balogh] No.

[Moldovanyi] Why has this happened nevertheless?

[Balogh] I would never have expected to see such devastation of the nation's assets like the one we witnessed between 1990 and 1994. Nor did I expect a government with a Socialist majority to pursue economic and social policies like the present ones. I fail to understand why we had to withdraw from the areas of health care and culture. That was not normal, and it could have been avoided altogether, by governing more competently.

[Moldovanyi] Is the Left-Wing Faction's demand for Lajos Bokros's resignation a salami tactic directed against Gyula Horn?

[Balogh] The Left-Wing Faction refrains from naming names in its political standpoints. The historical situation has developed in a way such that Hungary has become capitalist. That has to be accepted. We also acknowledge that the changeover has to be a dramatic one. In our opinion, the changeover could be carried out also in a way such that the gap between the enriched and the pauperized is a narrower one. This is also the objective of the MSZP's election program. Under the Miklos Nemeth and Jozsef Antall governments respectively, the nation lost 30 percent of its assets. This occurred because privatization and production were divorced from

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each other. Another big mistake was to withdraw from our Eastern markets. Together with Bokros's policies, of course, we are criticizing also the performance of Gyula Horn and his entire cabinet.

[Moldovanyi] You hinted that Lajos Bokros's economic policies differ from the MSZP's election program. At the same time, Ivan Vitanyi, the chairman of the Socialist Party's National Committee, begs to differ with the left-wing platform and tells our reporter that, essentially, the finance minister is building on the original program's foundation.

[Balogh] Evidently, neither of these views is gospel truth. Viewing the details, however, it is easy to demonstrate that Bokros is acting arbitrarily. In every law-governed country, for instance, the social-insurance fund's autonomy is something natural. But Bokros is unwilling to transfer to the social-insurance fund sufficient assets for its operation. Hence the fund is dependent on the state budget.

[Moldovanyi] Within the party, why is criticism of the government based on essentially different interpretations of social democracy?

[Balogh] Before answering this question, allow me to recall a few characteristics of the party's formation. The questions with which the Socialist Party is now faced stem from 1989. The MSZP was founded at the time as an alliance of platforms within it. The two most significant ones were the reform wing and the people's democratic platform. The reform wing itself comprised several directions; its members regarded the breakup of the MSZMP [Hungarian Socialist Workers Party] as their principal task. Imre Pozsgay and Miklos Nemeth were the reform wing's stalwarts, and they were joined by Gyula Horn and Ivan Vitanyi, among others.

[Moldovanyi] In your opinion, what was their objective, besides breaking up the MSZMP?

[Balogh] In my opinion, the members of the reform wing did not really know what they wanted. They proclaimed the need to withdraw from the workplace, but failed to think through where they would then engage in politics. They announced the political system's change, but did not clarify what the new political system should be like.

[Moldovanyi] Did the people's democratic platform know what it wanted?

[Balogh] Our standpoint was clearer. We wanted parliamentary and direct democracy, and a mixed economy as well. The platform cited the 1945-46 period as its historical antecedent. That was a time when medium-sized private businesses played a very significant role. How people's democracy became discredited—it emerged originally as the negation of Lenin's dictatorship of the workers and peasants, and shared power also with the middle class—is quite another question. The people's democratic platform was more progressive than the reform wing. In February 1988, before the national conference that replaced Kadar, for example, Gyorgy Fejti already announced that we wanted a multiparty system. The determining personalities of this wing were, for instance, Tamas Krausz and Csaba Hamori.

[Moldovanyi] Reverting to the original question: within the MSZP, it seems, everyone was interpreting social democracy in his own way.

[Balogh] The people's democratic platform wanted to achieve a more effective organization of the party. In 1989 we estimated that in this party, among its 800,000 members, it was possible to find merely 100,000 or 200,000 on whom one could truly rely. The genuine social democratic parties are mass parties. By comparison the MSZP, with its 30,000 and some members and with its present organization, does not resemble a social democratic party. The platforms have faded with time, and social democracy's meaning to the party has not crystallized. That would have required also more time. If we examine the traditional political parties, they rely essentially on two strata as their base of support. On the stratum of better trained skilled workers, and on the urban middle class. This base of support is reflected also in the political parties' outward appearance.

[Moldovanyi] As several of the platform's members have declared, the congress in Miskolc was a disappointment for the Left-Wing Faction. Officers of the MSZP will be facing reelection in March. With what kind of decision on personnel would you be satisfied?

[Balogh] With a decision that reflects both the relative strength of the forces within the party, and the principles laid down in the party's program.

[Moldovanyi] From this one can infer that the present executive committee reflects neither?

[Balogh] That's right. I hesitate to say whom I would like to see on the executive committee, because that might harm the chances of the person concerned.

[Moldovanyi] The name of Pal Fillo, too, was mooted at the platform's national conference in early January.

[Balogh] Yes, I can very well envisage Pal Fillo on the executive committee. He is one of the prominent personalities of the blue-collar division, a one-time printer with parliamentary experience. It would do the Social Party no harm to have also politically trained worker-politicians on its executive committee.

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[Moldovanyi] Do you intend to determine the party leadership's composition on an ideological basis?

[Balogh] That sounds ideological only here in Hungary. I cannot imagine a social democratic party without blue-collar workers. I would welcome 50,000 blue-collar workers in the MSZP, because then the leaders would have to confront more firmly the everyday realities. Because politics within the party often becomes an exchange of views between intellectuals. Of course, I would not go so far as to say that anyone with a capitalist background would be unable to suitably represent the blue-collar workers' interests.

[Moldovanyi] That the Left-Wing Faction demanded the resignation of Laszlo Mate, one of the party's deputy chairmen, just because he is a large-scale entrepreneur, has caused quite a stir. That critique, too, is reminiscent of the MSZMP's communist ideology.

[Balogh] In itself the fact that someone is a rich entrepreneur is not an obstacle to his becoming a member of the Socialist Party, nor to his eligibility for election to the party's governing body. Evidently Tamas Kraus had a personal reason for raising the issue of Laszlo Mate's resignation, but Kraus did this in a friendly tone.

[Moldovanyi] The congress in March for electing a new slate of officers will adopt also a program. What kind of final document would the Left-Wing Faction like to see? How should the congress influence the government?

[Balogh] I would like to see a final document that defines an independent, free and democratic Hungary. The *democratic* attribute should also imply *social sensitivity*. This is where I perceive the most gaps that need to be filled. At present we have three million people living below the poverty line, and the country will be the loser if the pauperization does not stop. That is why it is extremely urgent to proclaim the principles of solidarity and justice; and we must continue our politicking in the spirit of these ideals. The Left-Wing Faction will introduce its proposals accordingly.

[Moldovanyi] And if the congress does not accept your proposals?

[Balogh] Let there be no misunderstanding. We wish to achieve our objectives within the MSZP. And if our expectations are not met, we will continue to work within the party.

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B-H: Businessman Says Brown 'Offered Nothing Concrete'

AU0304113296 Paris AFP in English 1123 GMT 3 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina, April 3 (AFP)—U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown promised officials here Wednesday [3 April] that Washington would invest in rebuilding Bosnian industry but failed to provide concrete promises of cash, officials said.

Bajazit Jasarevic, manager of the main industrial complex in this northern Bosnian town, said Brown had visited the power plant here and said he had been given the "green light" to give help rebuilding the battered infrastructure.

"He told us he had got the green light to help (rebuilding the power plant) but offered nothing concrete in the way of investments yet," Jasarevic said.

Brown, accompanied by chief executives of a dozen major U.S. companies, flew into Bosnia Wednesday for a brief tour of the Balkan region and was scheduled to meet U.S. troops. He was also to meet business and political leaders in Bosnia and Croatia during the tour, as well as the prime ministers of both countries.

An official preparing Brown's visit said Tuesday the encounters would be "critical for the reconstruction process" in the war-torn former Yugoslav republic.

Brown's visit came after Bosnia joined the World Bank earlier this week. The bank has estimated that the country will need $5.1 billion over the next three years to help it recover from the destruction caused by the war.

The senior civilian official overseeing the implementation of the Bosnian peace process, Carl Bildt, said in Washington on Tuesday that post-war Bosnia needed $1.8 billion in aid this year to avoid unrest.

This is "the minimum that is required in order to start to get the essential part of the (Bosnian) economy going," Bildt said.

The official preparing Brown's visit said a number of the companies represented in the delegation accompanying him had already put in bids for World Bank projects to repair Bosnia's war-damaged infrastructure and telecommunications and boost its once-thriving tourism industry.

Brown was due later to travel to the Croatian port city of Dubrovnik where he was flagged to give a policy address before heading to the Croatian capital Zagreb for talks with croatian political and business leaders.

On Thursday, he was to fly to Sarajevo to meet leaders of the Moslem-Croat federation and acting Bosnian president Ejup Ganic as well as international finance officials.

B-H: Pejanovic Makes Statement After Talks With Perry

AU0204183296 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina Network in Serbo-Croatian 1700 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] During the state visits of U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry and World Bank President James Wolfensohn to Sarajevo, in addition to Federation Vice President and Presidency Member Ejup Ganic, the visitors also held talks with Presidency members Mirko Pejanovic and Ivo Komsic. Here is what Dr. Pejanovic said after the talks:

I told Mr. Perry my opinion about Sarajevo. The battle for an integral Sarajevo has been won. The battle for a multiethnic Sarajevo has neither been won nor lost. The Serbs are interested in returning to Sarajevo, both those who left at the beginning of the war and those who were forcefully displaced by the Pale leadership. The Serbs face two obstacles in returning to Sarajevo: the war criminals in Pale and resistance in the state structures in Sarajevo. All regulations pertaining to refugee rights must be coordinated with the Dayton accord. I asked Mr. Perry to help us in the struggle for a multiethnic Sarajevo.

In the part of his statement pertaining to talks with World Bank President James Wolfensohn, Mirko Pejanovic said:

Economic reconstruction is the main thing for building peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina. According to the Dayton accord, the Presidency and the government are the state leadership of all three peoples, which also includes the Serb people. There can be no reintegration of Bosnia-Herzegovina if there is no comprehensive concern for the entire territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Serb people have been impoverished by the war as much as the Bosniak and Croat peoples. The punishment envisaged for war criminals cannot be applied to the people. The Bosniak, Croat, and Serb people all need the World Bank's aid. The aid in the Serb entity must be contingent on the removal of people indicted for war crimes from public office and by the authorities' stance toward human rights. All relations with the World Bank can only go through the Bosnia-Herzegovina Government, and not through the respective entities' governments, as the Bosnia-Herzegovina Government is the state's legitimate international representative according to the Dayton accord, reads the statement of Presidency member Mirko Pejanovic.

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B-H: Weekly Interviews Vice President Ganic

AU0104181196 Sarajevo LJILJAN in Serbo-Croatian 20 Mar 96 pp 5-6

[Interview with Dr. Ejup Ganic, member of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Presidency and vice president of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation, by Hadzem Hajdarevic and Zehrudin Isakovic; place and date not given: "HDZ Will Miss the Main Issue While Concentrating on the Side Issues"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [LJILJAN] We would like to ask you to give us a short global view on the realization of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation. Frequent incidents, as well as the often emphasized "different understanding" of the Federation, point toward the fact that the realization of the Federation has reached a kind of a dead end. Do you have the same impression?

[Ganic] Well, you see, I do and I do not. I do—because if we were to make a kind of inventory of what has been done, such results would suggest themselves. However, we quickly forget what has already been taken care of. No one gives points for what has already been done. On the other hand, you know, there is some good news and some bad news. The good news is that support for the Federation among the Croat people as a whole is increasing, as well as in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a whole. This does not reflect to the extent that it should, and maybe it is not visible from the current development of events in the political sense. However, if you speak to the people from Dalmatia, Istria, Zagorje, Slavonia, etc., as well as with Croats from central Bosnia-Herzegovina, from the Posavina region, with the common people, you will see that there is a basis that you can count on. When we had political conflicts with the Belgrade regime before the war, Slobodan Milosevic mainly had the support of a large majority of Serbs. Therefore, we cannot totally compare the Croats to the Serbs on this issue. On the other hand, problems do exist. Do you know how they are reflected? We interpret the Washington agreement correctly. The Federation is a federation of cantons, and not two separate national entities. However, the Croat representatives obviously desire an ethnic division. They interpret the Federation as a union of two nations, which are completely separated, even territorially. Another problem also exists. They are saying: "The Federation is our final goal." We, however, are saying: "The Federation is also our goal, together with the goal of Bosnia-Herzegovina as an intact sovereign country." This second part is not mentioned by the Croats. Many of them see Bosnia-Herzegovina as a compilation of two states: the Federation and the Serb entity. We do not see such a Bosnia-Herzegovina nor are we fighting for it. We have fought, and are fighting for an intact single country. Nevertheless, we are also fighting for the Federation, and it is our final goal. However, an intact Bosnia-Herzegovina is also our final goal. The two are not mutually exclusive. The Croats therefore say: "The Federation and nothing else." They are not interested in what will happen with the Serb entity. Well, we have to be interested in that!

[LJILJAN] What are you interested in specifically?

[Ganic] Our ideal wish would be for Bosnia-Herzegovina to become a solid country, for the population to return to their homes, and then to move on to a form of tighter integration. Perhaps the entire country could be divided into cantons. In other words, the entire country would have some kind of federal structure. Had we understood the current borders as a division of Bosnia-Herzegovina, then the Serbs could not have got 49 percent, not according to any logical reasoning. [Serb Republic President] Karadzic would have said: "Give me 25 percent and let me leave!" We never even thought of that possibility—that of a definite division of the area. This is why: The integrity of the country is like a crystal glass, if you give someone a piece of it, you no longer have a glass.

[LJILJAN] The prevailing public opinion is that the Bosniak part of the country's leadership is conducting a much too lenient policy. To what extent do you agree with this judgment?

[Ganic] Mostly those who were not here during the war, as well as those who were hiding in the cellars, are now talking very loudly. I think that the real fighters do not think that way. You see, it is easy to mess something up, but then what? We have not given in on anything essential. It may sometimes seem as if we are too lenient, but that is because we only have one Bosnia-Herzegovina, and because we do not want to go to war unless it is absolutely necessary. We have always lacked arms. We are better with our arguments in peaceful times than those who are against Bosnia-Herzegovina. On the other hand, through this "lenient" policy, as you call it, we have tried to make space for a large number of alternative politicians from the Croat ranks. You can see that the HDZ [Croatian Democratic Community] today has an increasing number of problems in its own area. The HDZ is the key party through which the Croat nation is organized. In other words, the HDZ may miss the main issue while concentrating on the side issues. You may think that our response is not adequate when talking of the pilot program that deals with the return of exiles to Bugojno, Jajce, Stolac, and Travnik. We have permitted the Croats to return to Travnik, while on the other hand, in response, Bosniak families did not return

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to Stolac. Moreover, those homes that still existed were mined. What is one supposed to do in such a situation? The international community is following all this, and knows precisely what is going on. On the other hand, the international community is very slow in planning some concrete measures of punishment. Instead of reacting swiftly, we have decided to persistently push forward, to sign further agreements..... This is the policy of "one step for every two steps." However, as you can see, even such a policy has its limits. We do not want war. Whenever we had problems, our paths were blocked. That is why we are more prepared to negotiate for days, rather than making moves that may lead to a conflict. On the other hand, we have involved the international community, and we view that as of benefit. The fact that the international community is not working efficiently enough should not discourage us. We include the international community in every phase of the crisis in our area, in order to ensure a correct portrayal through an integral analysis later on.

[LJILJAN] Was there any real alternative to the "lenient" policy that we are talking about?

[Ganic] There are always alternatives. The question is whether they are worth it. With regard to this analysis I would like to say that the economy in Croatia cannot take on a more serious path until the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina stabilizes. Tourism demands peace in the Balkans. Concurrently, the cooperation with the Islamic countries, as well as some other countries, is not possible for Croatia until a stable peace is reached here.

[LJILJAN] The situation in the Bihac region gets worse from one day to the next. The Croat media is reporting that the Croats living there are threatened, although the area had always been given as a model area. On the other hand, some analysts (the Croat ones) estimate that the Croat political leadership is planning to totally isolate that part of Bosnia-Herzegovina territory from the center in Sarajevo, and gradually guide it toward Croatia, in order to fill in the pretzel [reference to the appearance of the Croat-held territories]. Their agile transfer of the Mrkonjic and Sipovo municipalities fits into this as well. The conclusion is, therefore, that the incidents and the overstating of intimidation are both part of a wider strategy!

[Ganic] A quantity of information exists in support of such an assumption. The Croat authorities have stopped the direct transportation of crude oil from Croatia to that part of our country. Crude oil may only be imported through a border crossing that is located somewhere right in the south. In this way they have achieved a situation in which crude oil must be transported through Croat cantons for it to reach Bihac. This brings about extra customs duty and complications. However, we drew attention to this matter immediately. On the other hand, if you look at a map, you will see that the Mrkonjic municipality was so generously turned over along with everything that covers the so-called Put Avnoja [AVNOJ—Antifascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia—Road]. You know that this was the shortest path of communication from central Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Bihac region. We will respond to such an approach, if it turns out to be part of a wider conquering policy.

[LJILJAN] In what way?

[Ganic] Well, by connecting that part of our territory to the center in a firmer manner. We insist that the Zeljava airport at Bihac be opened. The border there goes through some hangars, and the Croats are in no hurry there. We would like to have an air connection to Bihac. I will not, of course, reveal all the kinds of pressures that we are capable of applying. You see, we grow stronger under pressure. We do many things under some kind of blackmail. We are like a tree that is bent by the wind, but every day from another direction. If we are wise, this will turn out to be a very strong and solid tree. Many nations and states have become solid and stable particularly because they did not have an easy route.

[LJILJAN] We have to ask you about what is happening in Kulen-Vakuf. Could the problems there be seen in the context of the "filling in of the pretzel" of which we have already spoken?

[Ganic] Yes. The incidents in Kulen-Vakuf particularly confirm our fears. The Croat army was in Kulen-Vakuf. It was supposed to leave the country, according to the Dayton agreement. The Croat army has formally left the area, but has pulled the HVO [Croatian Defense Council] into the areas. This has caused problems....

[LJILJAN] Do you think that it is the intention of the Croat authorities to keep the HVO in the area?

[Ganic] They are now trying to negotiate. If they do not agree with something in central Bosnia-Herzegovina, they will say: "We will not leave Kulen-Vakuf, unless you do..." this or that. They are trying to work with a blackmail system. However, you see, the majority of the journalists expect me to say something severe, something harsh, according to the principle that a thought-out reaction is not a good reaction. On the contrary, Bosnia-Herzegovina's political defense program is most important to me, so I am not interested in receiving compliments like: "He's the right person for the job," or "He really told them off."

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[LJILJAN] What do you think of the attempt to rehabilitate Fikret Abdic? His party is registered in Mostar.

[Ganic] They are preparing him there in Croatia.... Those who do not regard Bosnia-Herzegovina with good intentions regret the fact that in it exists a critical political substance of the Bosnia-Herzegovina nation. This is, of course, the SDA [Party of Democratic Action]. This party has done the most for the creation of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Army. Naturally, just like any other large party, it has its shortcomings. There are a number of people who are not really skilled politicians.... The attempt to rehabilitate Fikret Abdic cannot be seen as anything but an attempt to demolish the political substance in Bosnia-Herzegovina. All those who support him would like to divide us into 10 or 15 parts, so that every group has two to three delegates, and the HDZ has, let us say, 50 delegates. As we do have mass support, their intention is therefore to break it up and to disable us from channeling it in a productive direction. This is the first time that the Bosniak people have been able to influence the political processes by voting. This is a very dangerous fact for those who oppose Bosnia-Herzegovina.

[LJILJAN] It has never publicly been made clear whether the Bosnia-Herzegovina authorities ever asked the Croat authorities to hand over Fikret Abdic. Do you see the registration of his party as a kind of provocation?

[Ganic] As far as I know, the MUP [Ministry for Interior Affairs] requested his extradition. Regarding the party's registration—you know, when you register something in west Mostar, then you more or less know what it represents and how much it is worth. It is my policy to always assume the worse. This is how we are regarding it now, and we have included these facts into our calculation of the political system.

[LJILJAN] Considering such facts, as well as some worse and better ones, how are you cooperating with [Bosnia-Herzegovina] President Zubak?

[Ganic] The problem is not the cooperation, but the results. We have no problem communicating, we maintain contact, we meet, discuss.... This human dimension is absolutely in order. However, our normal cooperation is not enough for us to reach concrete results. The fact that many HDZ politicians are writing letters and asking [Croat President] Tudjman to intervene, and not Zubak, speaks for itself of how Croats define their personnel priorities. That is an obvious case of interference in the internal affairs of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

[LJILJAN] Do you think that Zubak is not in a position to make important decisions?

[Ganic] It would not be fair for me to say yes or no. We have cooperated a great deal.... I accepted him as a person who is in favor of Bosnia-Herzegovina. That is how I approached our cooperation, unguardedly. On the other hand, the first Croat in Bosnia-Herzegovina to pursue an active native policy will go down in the history of the Croat nation. Therefore, the Croat politician that says to Zagreb—you see, Bosnia-Herzegovina is a special country of nations, among others the Croat nation, and here we have our specific interests, will go down in the history of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Moreover, I seem to have expected too much from the people in this war. Because of this, I now try to extract at least one molecule of something positive out of every significant personality while pursuing my policies. Zubak has something in his career that gives him great chances in Bosnia-Herzegovina politics. First of all, he is a moderate and educated person. Second, he is a successful lawyer. Third, he was a member of the Territorial Defense. He was therefore in fact a soldier of the Bosnia-Herzegovina army, he was even seriously wounded, and was treated at Tešanj. On the other hand, I also see him as a person who feels just as comfortable in non-Croat company. In other words, he is quite comfortable with multiethnicity; that is how I see him. To be honest, I like working with such people.

[LJILJAN] Nevertheless, does he have the freedom of his own political opinion?

[Ganic] You see, the freedom of one's own political opinion is the furthest limit when talking about a Croat politician in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I have already said that he who reaches it not only by words but also through actions will go down in history. The others will not come too close to the history books.

[LJILJAN] Are there any, shall we say, secret meetings between the Croat and Bosniak side, dealing with the exchange of territory or are there any suggestions in this sense? For example, Jajce for Kladusa, or Jajce for the area around Mostar?

[Ganic] No way! Why would we exchange something that is ours for something else that is ours? The Croats in Jajce do not bother us; we even view it as a comparative advantage.... After all, Jajce is theirs as well.

[LJILJAN] Excuse the question, but the logic of the negotiations so far, especially the Croat side, as well as the overall development of the situation, all suggest that we ask it.

[Ganic] No.... These exchanges have been made up. There has neither been talk of them, nor would we do anything as stupid.

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[LJILJAN] We spoke of Jajce. In order to pass through the town, one must pay one percent of the value of goods....

[Ganic] The same is happening in Kiseljak. In order to pass through, you have to pay some tax of a certain number of German marks for "municipal activities," or similar fabrications. Because of this, they are greatly affected by the end of the blockade on Sarajevo. Do you remember the cafe at Stupska Petlja? One had to pay 1000 German marks per family member to pass through to Kiseljak. The Chetniks get one percent, the others take their share.... When the history of Sarajevo is written, this will also be in it. That is how the situation is in Jajce at the moment. However, I believe that it will soon be taken care of.

[LJILJAN] These days, especially after the incident in Hadzici, people are speculating that it might come again to a war between the HVO and the Bosnia-Herzegovina Army. Is such a war at all possible, considering the presence of IFOR [Implementation Force]?

[Ganic] No. I think that there will not be such a war.

[LJILJAN] What are the basic misunderstandings regarding Croat demands for the formation of new municipalities?

[Ganic] Here is what it is all about. They continuously try to play the white figures. New municipalities can be formed, and there are no problems regarding that, but only after the cantons are constructed. A demand needs to be made, and then it will go through the normal legal procedure. However, they are approaching the matter in the following way: We want this municipality; if you do not want to form it, then we will not implement the program of the Federation! Many have gotten the idea of a checkpoint into their heads: To stop people, take customs duty, to unload, to take other people's property.

[LJILJAN] There was a lot of talk about the Rome meeting, but little was really said. Could you concretely describe the pressures that the Bosnia-Herzegovina side was exposed to and what concrete form these pressures took?

[Ganic] There really were numerous pressures. The Pogorelica case came up immediately after we arrived there. The next was Mostar. You know, a few days ago, Izetbegovic wrote a letter to the citizens of Mostar, in which he revealed the anatomy of the negotiations regarding that town. When we went there, to our own astonishment, we saw that the European Union was regarding [EU administrator in Mostar] Hans Koschnick's proposal as a simple drawing. The EU says that the Croats rejected the plan, and that they cannot yet apply sanctions against Croatia in order to force it to accept the proposal, because they are not yet united in opinion. We said that we do accept Koschnick's proposal, but could do nothing about it, because those who brought Koschnick did not support him. I was for the suggestion to postpone the whole issue for one week, in order to make consultations, in Mostar as well as here.... However, there were also those who thought that everything had to be worked on immediately. In the letter, the president wrote that he was for an immediate decision of some kind. At this point he said something that one usually does not say in politics: He said that he cut off the discussion and made a decision, and that he is taking responsibility. This reveals a new dimension to President Izetbegovic. He is not only a politician. Such people stay on for longer.

[LJILJAN] The citizens of Mostar themselves are very angry.... They are saying: "What the HVO could not achieve by war, it achieved through peace!"

[Ganic] Yes. They believe that we have accepted the worse solution, and that we had a better alternative. However, we did not have a better alternative. As I said, Europe itself did not support Koschnick, and that is the misfortune. That is why we were unable to do more. If we had been stubborn and had insisted on Koschnick's proposal, it would only have resulted in an even worse solution. That is as clearly as we were told. I feel uncomfortable that I have been brought into a position to talk about the weaknesses of the EU, because the radical elements on the Croat side may use this and say: "You see how weak the EU is; we could do even worse things!" Such things are said at closed discussions.

[LJILJAN] Somewhere in the corridors people have started guessing that the EU and the international community has suggested to President Izetbegovic to step down from the foremost position in the country. He would apparently do so along with Tudjman and Milosevic, according to the principle of some kind of leveling out.

[Ganic] This has all been made up by idle people. It is all nonsense.

[LJILJAN] Is it true that at the Rome conference the Croat side made the suggestion to divide the mixed central Bosnia canton into two, single nation cantons?

[Ganic] No. They suggested that the west Herzegovina canton be joined with the Mostar canton. If that were done, the inhabitants of west Herzegovina would dominate the area by number. We have already signed the agreement dealing with the borders of the cantons, and there is nothing to change. It was signed by Zubak and myself.

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[LJILJAN] What is the current situation regarding the port of Ploce? Is it not true that the talks are facing some serious problems?

[Ganic] Unfortunately. We do have some material rights to that port, because we had practically built it ourselves. However, this is only being manipulated. It is very important that we reach an agreement on the use of the Ploce port, but I hope that we will not be forced to put other ports into consideration.

[LJILJAN] Are you referring to the port of Bar?

[Ganic] That is what you said....

[LJILJAN] In the same vein there are ever louder demands for a new "Karadjordjevo," however this time as a Bosniak-Serb cooperation. But, joking aside—seriously, what are current relations with the Serb negotiators like?

[Ganic] We communicate with Serbia. There are ongoing problems. We are not satisfied with their attitude toward war criminals. They must extradite Karadzic and Mladic. Moreover, they have made some unacceptable demands, for example, regarding the continuity of former Yugoslavia. However, we have to communicate with them because there are close to half a million Bosniaks there.

[LJILJAN] A lot was written and said about Alija Izetbegovic's so-called secret envelope. What is the truth about it, does it actually exist, and was the meeting shortly before the president's departure for the hospital really that dramatic?

[Ganic] What is said is mostly empty guesses. We were, of course, all affected by the president's illness. There is, however, a system that automatically functions when the president is not able to fulfill his duty. It is true that I have taken the place of the president in the presidency most of the time so far. I have been doing so on a regular basis since 2 May 92, whenever he was absent or prevented from doing his work. There is no need for any great speculation or surprises regarding this matter. On the other hand, I am a member of the SDA, the party that won at the elections, so this also strengthens my position in the presidency. Do not forget that both President Izetbegovic and I have been in the presidency ever since the first day. Moreover, I believe that the president himself cleared up such dilemmas in some of his interviews.

[LJILJAN] Therefore, there was nothing dramatic, no panic....

[Ganic] I did not sense anything dramatic.

[LJILJAN] You did not say whether a "secret envelope" exists.

[Ganic] I would not like to talk about such issues. The president is still in good shape. He is now resting. The president is not the kind of person who would want to create dilemmas. Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Bosniaks are so close to his heart that he has made everything else of secondary importance. He is aware that many things will have to be taken care of even after his mandate is over.... (By some strange coincidence, just as we were discussing this topic, the telephone in Dr. Ganic's office rang! It was President Izetbegovic. Our interviewee went into another room and our conversation was continued about five or six minutes later.)

[LJILJAN] You have just spoken to the president. May we know what you spoke about and how he is feeling?

[Ganic] I was in Gorazde today and the president wanted to know my impressions. He asked me how the people there felt. Otherwise, the president is, thank God, feeling much better.

B-H: Muratovic, Albania's Serreqi Discuss Cooperation

LD0204220396 Sarajevo Televizija Bosne i Hercegovine in Serbo-Croatian 2000 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Alfred Serreqi, Albanian minister of foreign affairs, ended a two-day visit to Sarajevo today. Minister Serreqi had talks with Dr. Hasan Muratovic, prime minister of the republic; and Enver Kreso, minister of energy, mining, and industry in the federation government, on the development of cooperation between the two countries.

[Unidentified correspondent] During their talks, Prime Minister Muratovic and Minister Serreqi concluded that the way has been paved for the further strengthening of cooperation between the two countries, for which there is great interest and concrete scope.

To this end, Dr. Muratovic informed Minister Serreqi that the Bosnia-Herzegovina Government would be sending a business delegation to Albania next month.

The delegation from the Republic of Albania was also received by Enver Kreso, minister of energy, mining, and industry in the federation government. They discussed possible kinds of cooperation in the fields of industry, energy, and mining. Minister Kreso underscored the fact that Albania is in the development stage, while Bosnia-Herzegovina is in the reconstruction stage, of its electricity system—and herein lies one of the forms of possible cooperation between the two countries.

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B-H: Izetbegovic's 'First Public Appearance' Noted

AU0204193496 Paris AFP in English 1926 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sarajevo, April 2 (AFP)—Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic made his first public appearance Tuesday since being rushed to hospital six weeks ago with heart trouble, an AFP correspondent noted.

Izetbegovic, who was hospitalized on February 22 for what were termed "sudden heart problems," made his appearance Tuesday at a meeting of leaders of several Bosnian political parties in Sarajevo.

The 70-year-old president, who has been replaced in his absence by Moslem-Croat federation Vice-President Ejup Ganic, was released from hospital in mid-March to continue his convalescence at home. The treatment is expected to last for two months.

Few details have been given by authorities on the exact nature of Izetbegovic's illness or his current state of health. The president was believed to have suffered heart problems in the middle of last year.

Izetbegovic's first public appearance since his hospitalization saw him alongside Haris Silajdzic, the former Bosnian prime minister, who quit his post in January after splitting with Izetbegovic and his ruling Moslem SDA [Party of Democratic Action] party.

The party leaders at the meeting drafted a declaration supporting an "integrated and sovereign Bosnia" with a multi-ethnic population.

The declaration is due to be formally signed Wednesday.

B-H: Parties Adopt Declaration on Bosnia's Unity

LD0204215496 Sarajevo Televizija Bosne i Hercegovine in Serbo-Croatian 2000 GMT 2 Apr 96

["Text" of draft declaration issued by 10 Bosnia-Herzegovina political parties and associations on 2 April]

[FBIS Translated Text] Faced with the most recent threat of the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina, aware of the danger that such aspirations present to our country and also to the peace and stability of the whole region, and also aware of our ideological and other differences which we do not wish to deny, we, the undersigned would like in this way to reconfirm our strong and irrevocable support for:

1. The integral and sovereign state of Bosnia-Herzegovina;

2. Bosnia-Herzegovina as a democratic and multiethnic community based on human rights and liberties.

With regard to these two goals, we, despite all our differences, form a united front and we will oppose together, just as during the past war, all attempts of breaking the country up into apartheid zones.

We observe with regret the hesitation and indecision of the international community in fulfilling commitments and promises from Dayton. This has given strength to forces which have been acting against the undivided and democratic Bosnia-Herzegovina from the very beginning.

That is why we request the following be done, as a minimum:

1. To continue with effective prosecution of war criminals, and their arrest and trial.

2. To ensure, with help from the Implementation Force, the return of those refugees who wish to return to their homes.

3. To fulfill promises in connection with the reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina so that social peace and stability in the country are ensured.

We wish to warn the world that dividing Bosnia would not only mean a tragedy for our country and all its peoples; it would lead to a lasting instability in the Balkans and endanger the peace in Europe. That is why we have decided to publish this declaration and let our public and the relevant world players know about it.

[Dated] 2 April 1996, Sarajevo

[Signed] Party of Democratic Action

Liberal Party
Liberal Bosniak Organization
Civic Democratic Party
People's Party
Party for Bosnia-Herzegovina
Serbian Renewal Movement
Council of the Congress of Bosniak Intellectuals
Serb Civic Council
Jewish Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina

B-H: Radio Assails IFOR, Police for Choosing Partition

AU0204152096 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina Network in Serbo-Croatian 1300 GMT 2 Apr 96

[Report by Jasminko Krehic]

[FBIS Translated Text] Most of the attention focused on the incident which recently occurred in Vrace on the territory of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation was due to the fact that an Associated Press journalist was arrested. Everyone was up in arms over the fact that

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the police from the Serb entity could arrest someone on federal territory, but very few people realized that much bigger things were at stake here. The conclusion was that everything happened because the Implementation Force [IFOR] does not know where the border between the two entities is; however, the real problem is that IFOR is only just preparing to define the borders.

The Dayton accord envisages borders between entities, borders that should primarily link rather than separate. The smaller the number of borders, the more refugees will be returning home. It is clear that such a situation does not suit the current leadership in Pale. Criminals Karadzic and Mladic are still the strongmen there, and they are looking for ways to avoid even thinking about the fact that Bosnia-Herzegovina is one state, irrespective of the number of its parts. That is why they have decided, in cooperation with international institutions, to let the Federation implement the unpopular move. Namely, the Federation is supposed to limit movement, closely control all those who wish to cross from one side to another, or even completely ban movement between the two entities. What a good thing for Karadzic and his supporters. The Serb entity is trying to force the Federation to be the one to take the first step toward partition. No matter how much they talk about being unbiased, IFOR and the international police have opted for partition.

On the other hand, the whole incident was treated rather lightly by the Bosnia-Herzegovina media, which, satisfied that correspondent Latal had been released, promptly forgot the whole thing. However, someone who cares for Bosnia-Herzegovina cannot erase the image of Vrace from his mind. On the one side, there were police officers in one uniform, on the other side, police officers in different uniforms; all of them armed and ready to prevent entry into their respective areas. The only thing missing was a border crossing with two flags, which would have made it clear that this was a border. Yet, this is precisely what is should not be.

B-H: Karadzic on Statehood, Sovereignty of Serb Republic

LD0304091396 Belgrade SRNA in Serbo-Croatian 0138 GMT 3 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sarajevo, 3 Apr (SRNA)—Radovan Karadzic, president of the Serb Republic, was pleased with the fact that, following a long discussion at its 58th session, the Serb Republic People's Assembly endorsed his report.

"There are many traps on the road ahead and some of us could unintentionally give our enemies reason to believe that Bosnia might be integrated," Karadzic told reporters after the Assembly session in Pale last night.

He said that the Assembly made it clear that the degree of statehood and sovereignty granted to the Serb Republic in Dayton cannot be reduced and that "we have the right to expand our freedom using legitimate political means, because this is imminent to political life in any kind of union or community of nations."

Commenting on the establishment of the state committee for cooperation with the international community and the Croat-Muslim Federation, Karadzic mentioned the previous committee headed by Nikola Koljevic, vice president of the Serb Republic.

"The main headquarters of our army also had its representative in that committee. Everything was centralized in one place so our enemies from the international community could not have any say in deciding who was to represent the Serb Republic– the platform was always the same," Karadzic explained.

He said that centralization is necessary again and noted that, according to the Serb Republic constitution, the state is represented by the president of the Republic, who can authorize the foreign minister to speak on its behalf.

The foreign minister can also authorize another representative to represent the state in international contacts regarding certain issues.

President Karadzic warned against numerous attempts to interpret the Dayton agreement to the detriment of the Serb Republic.

"We are not paranoid, of course. We do not believe that this is the attitude of all members of the international community but attempts have been made to establish Bosnia as a unified state again, attempts to wipe out the borders and the identity of the Serb Republic," Karadzic explained.

He said that the committee will determine the platform and will decide who will represent the Serb Republic regarding certain issues.

"The assembly defined policy a long time ago and no one can change it in the meantime. Only the assembly can change policy and we in the executive authorities must implement it as skillfully as possible," Karadzic said, adding that a number of bills were adopted at the final part of the session last night.

"The assembly must soon pass new legislation which will provide a framework for a new situation, a new economy, and more political and economic freedom,

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because if not combined, they are not worth much," President Karadzic said.

B-H: Karadzic To Head Pale's International Liaison Committee

AU0304072396 Paris AFP in English 0410 GMT 3 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Pale, Bosnia-Herzegovina, April 3 (AFP)—The Bosnian Serb parliament early Wednesday [3 April] ended a special session called to consider bringing its constitution into line with the Dayton peace accords.

Members appointed Bosnian Serb political leader Radovan Karadzic to head a committee of cooperation with the international community, succeeding another committee that had been led by Republika Srpska (RS) vice-president Nikola Koljevic.

Karadzic told journalists after the parliamentary session that the setting up of such a committee was "in line with the constitution of the RS under which the president of the republic represents the state."

Charged with war crimes by an international tribunal, Karadzic does not figure in the Bosnian Serbs' negotiations with the international community.

He said the creation of the committee was "indispensable" due to "the numerous attempts being made to interpret the Dayton accords to the Serbs' detriment."

These bids, he affirmed, were aimed at "restoring a unitary state" in Bosnia-Herzegovina, "wiping out borders" and "eliminating the character of a state from the RS."

He added: "From now on we shall ourselves fix our platform and choose our own negotiators" with the international community. [passage omitted]

B-H: Serb-Croat POW's Exchanged at Border 2 Apr

LD0204194896 Belgrade SRNA in Serbo-Croatian 1905 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Srbac, 2 Apr (SRNA)—An exchange of POW's was carried out today at the border between the [Bosnian] Serb Republic and the Republic of Croatia, near Srbac and Davor.

The Serb side released six members of the Croatian Army, including Colonel Vladimir Sumanovac, commander of the Croatian air force combat sector, while the Croatian side released 15 Serb soldiers. [passage omitted]

"We are not in a position to carry out a complete exchange for technical reasons," Major Ivan Grujic, chairman of the Croatian Commission for the Exchange of POW's, said.

Lieutenant Col. Nedeljko Savic, chairman of the 1st Krajina Corps' [of the Bosnian Serb army] Commission for the Exchange of POW's, said that 13 more Serb soldiers are still being held prisoner in Croatia.

The two commissions pledged to submit all lists of POW's to the other side by 9 April.

B-H: Status of 'Mujahidin' in Bosnia Viewed

MM0104160696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 31 Mar 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Jamil Rafael from Sarajevo: "The Mujahidin Left Bosnia for Chechnya and the Iranians Were Expelled From Tuzla; Those Who Remained at Zenica Have Trimmed Their Beards To Avoid NATO Harassment"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At no time during the war did the number of Muslim and foreign fighters in Bosnia exceed 550, according to numerous sources. They were attached to small battalions in the field of operation of the Bosnian Army 2d and 3d Corps along a 150-km strip extending from the east of Tuzla to the west of Zenica.

But these fighters, who established close relations with Islamic religious institutions as well as with the ruling (Islamic) Party of Democratic Action, succeeded in mobilizing over 2,000 Bosnian Muslims who joined their formations, which they called "Mujahidin" formations.

The majority of the foreign fighters came from the Gulf countries, Palestine, Egypt, Sudan, the Arab Maghreb, and Pakistan. They refused, however, to allow the Iranians to join them for fear of political repercussions. But as Abu-Rashid, one of the mujahidin, told AL-HAYAH, the Iranians were deployed in various places that were shrouded in utter secrecy, within the Bosnian Army sectors, and were entrusted with tasks under a military agreement concluded between the Bosnian and Iranian Governments.

Abu-Rashid, who operated within the ranks of one of the "Mujahidin Battalions," which comprised 25 foreign fighters, at Celic (20 kilometers east of Tuzla), said that he was one of the members of that battalion who remained in Tuzla having married Bosnian girls and obtained Bosnian citizenship. He declined, however, to reveal their present duties and confined himself to saying that "they have been working in the field of religious guidance and are ready to resume the holy struggle should the need arise."

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Abu-Rashid refused to disclose the number of Muslim and foreign fighters still in Bosnia. But he pointed out that most of them are at Zenica though they had to trim their beards to avoid harassment by NATO forces. He said that the mujahidin who had left Bosnia and who had no previous problems with their governments have now returned to their countries, while a large number of them have gone to Chechnya.

Many of the Celic inhabitants, which AL-HAYAH has visited, reiterated what Abu-Rashid stated about the number of foreigners in the "Mujahidin Battalion" that operated in their city. They said that seven of these mujahidin were killed in the fighting for Uzun [as transliterated] Heights while two others were killed at Vares (which lies between Tuzla and Zenica.)

At one of the Islamic relief organizations in Tuzla, "Abu-Sulayman," who was in close contact with the "Mujahidin Battalions," stated that "foreign fighters began to arrive in Bosnia toward the end of 1992, and 200 fighters were deployed at special bases prepared for them by the Bosnian Government in the area surrounding Zenica." "Abu-Sulayman" added that relations between the mujahidin and the Bosnian Army were coordinated through Islamic organizations and circles within the Army. He stressed that "all the battles fought by the mujahidin were approved by the [Bosnian] Army and were in accordance with specific military plans."

He pointed out that the Bosnian Government disbanded the "Mujahidin Battalions" about two months ago, though the Army still contains seven brigades known as the "Islamic brigades," deployed at Tuzla (in the northeast), Zenica (in the center), Sarajevo (the capital), Konjic (in the south), and Bihac (in the northwest).

A fighter from the "Islamic Brigade" at Lukavac (10 km west of Tuzla), with the nom de guerre of "Muharram," told AL-HAYAH that "all religious rules and commitments that were applied in the mujahidin formations have been applied to the Islamic brigades as well, though officially they come under the command of the Bosnian Army. But because they occupied a distinguished position, they were called the Mujahidin Brigades."

Muharram added that the brigade to which he belongs always faces problems "with elements of American and Swedish forces in the area, as these elements enter the brigade's headquarters any time they wish to search and check identity cards."

He pointed out that General Delic, commander of the 2d Corps in the Bosnian Army, of which the Islamic brigade at Lukavac forms a part, had originally refused to permit NATO forces to enter the [Islamic brigade's] camp, but later had to permit them to do so on orders from the Sarajevo authorities and thus the storming and investigation operations became permissible. "When they ask us, we do not deny that we are Bosnian mujahidin and that we follow the dictates of Islamic laws and religious commitments and duties, but we do not act in isolation from military orders."

At the Tuzla Dar al-Fatwa [religious opinion establishment], which supervises the affairs of the Muslims in 22 northern Bosnian townships, the Mufti's assistant Basim Sayfuldin told AL-HAYAH that the Muslim officials "have always had a presence in the Bosnian Army camps through their contacts with the officials in charge of communal relations, and these Muslim officials' activities center on religious guidance and lectures as well as participation in religious festivities."

A source at the Dar al-Fatwa stated that there was no Iranian activity at all in the Tuzla area, as the "Iranian cultural center was asked to terminate its presence at Tuzla toward the beginning of January, after those responsible for it went too far in their distribution of leaflets and publications calling for religious extremism and arousing religious feuds, paying no attention to the warnings issued to them by Mufti Husayn Effendi Kafazovic." The source added that the mufti "visited Iran to convey his complains to the authorities there, but he could not put an end to the behavior of the workers at the Iranian cultural center, and so he asked the Bosnian Government authorities officially to close the center down to avoid the creation of any sedition in the city."

Ivo Andetic, leader of the Croatian Democratic Union Party's Tuzla branch, told AL-HAYAH that he has often met with "some of the foreign Muslim mujahidin during the war, but his contacts with them have ceased since the beginning of this year. We now have no information about the presence of foreign or Iranian fighters within the Tuzla area."

In Sarajevo, reserve officer Hasan al-Nimr (of Palestinian origin) told AL-HAYAH: "The problem of foreigners operating within the ranks of the Bosnia Army will continue to be a bone of contention between the Bosnian Government and international circles. The Bosnian Government does not consider their presence to be in contravention of the Dayton peace accord as long as they hold Bosnian citizenship. But international circles refuse to recognize their new status as Bosnian citizens."

Al-Nimr pointed out that, throughout the war, he served as a member of the High Command of the Bosnian Army 1st Corps in the Sarajevo area and that he was in

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charge of logistics. He now holds the rank of a reserve major.

Al-Nimr said that he married a Sarajevo girl and obtained Bosnian citizenship before the war, affirming that hundreds of foreigners were granted citizenship during the war "in appreciation of their participation in fighting the enemies or in return for sums of money ranging between 500 and 1,500 German marks."

AL-HAYAH inquired about the circumstances in which the first American soldier to die in Bosnia, early in February, was killed. The American soldier's death coincided with the visit of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to Bosnia.

One of the doctors who participated in the autopsy on the American soldier's body at the Tuzla Medical Center has stated that the American soldier was killed outside his vehicle and died as a result of receiving four bullets from a 9-mm gun, which lodged in his head and were fired at a distance of only 2 cm. The doctor said that the soldier tried to put up resistance, as evident from his nails which contained traces of skin from another person.

He said that the crime took place in the Banovici village area, which is inhabited by the Muslims and which lies 40 km west of Tuzla. He added that the inhabitants of the area said that three persons took part in killing the American soldier "who had had an indecent liaison with a girl from the area."

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Croatia: Ganic, Albanian Counterpart Discuss EU, Kosovo

LD0304120196 Zagreb Radio Croatia Network in Serbo-Croatian 1100 GMT 3 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic has had talks in Zagreb with Albanian Foreign Minister Alfred Serreqi. Vera Tomasek has a report:

[Serreqi] After the talks, the two foreign ministers made brief statements. We paid much attention today to the situation in the region and to European integration, both with respect to the Republic of Croatia and to the Republic of Albania. Minister Granic said:

[Begin Granic recording] As for the Republic of Croatia, we wish to develop good relations with all countries in the region and are in favor of normalizing relations with Belgrade. However, we oppose any sort of association and will not attend any Balkan conferences.

The Republic of Croatia has the fundamental strategic goal to become a member of Euro-Atlantic political and security associations. This means that we expect to become a full-fledged member of the Council of Europe in May, that PHARE [Poland-Hungary—Program for Economic Reconversion] will be made available to us, and that we wish to sign a trade and cooperation agreement with the European Union. We do not wish any regional approaches, we want to have direct relations with the European Union. [end recording]

[Serreqi] The Albanian foreign minister informed journalists that he also spoke with his Croatian counterpart about the situation in Kosovo.

Croatia: War Crimes Trial Viewed As Necessity

AU0304122596 Rijeka NOVI LIST in Serbo-Croatian 2 Apr 96 p 5

[Commentary by Drazen Vukov Colic: "Saving One's Good Name"]

[FBIS Translated Text] From all that was said and agreed in Zagreb on the occasion of the visit of the U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry, THE NEW YORK TIMES has paid close attention to the Hague expectations regarding HVO [Croatian Defense Council] General Tihomir Blaskic, who was initially rather disputably protected under the Zagreb military umbrella by Republic President Franjo Tudjman during the nauseating Dayton negotiations and has now been symbolically delivered up to the International Criminal Tribunal. The delivery was accompanied by some unusual apologies, in which Blaskic's lawyers were blithely accused of being responsible for postponing his recent "voluntary journey" to the international tribunal; and even some pleasing, but nonetheless personal matters (the birth of his son) were published. Still, they were only days, not weeks, of postponements in the customary attempt to strike a deal between the prosecution and defense, while the president obviously wanted to show that the Croatian state had nothing to do with it, in order to show, even with these unexpected explanations, the sincerity behind some very embarrassing Croatian diplomatic, political, and judicial promises.

In all this — it seems — Tihomir Blaskic has again agreed to play the role of self-sacrificing soldier. In the agreed game of saving the good name of the Croatian military and state, he "voluntarily" travels to the Hague, even though prosecutor Goldstone will not fulfill everything he allegedly promised lawyer Hodak. After all, others of unimpeachable integrity, like Slobodan Lang, have spoken about Blaskic as a very honorable officer, while even Drazen Budisa once publicly said that when he visited Bosnia he had never heard an ugly word about this soldier, though he must certainly have heard a whole lot of ugly stories on all sides of the conflict. So that it might even happen that Blaskic will be released or sentenced only on the principle of "hierarchical responsibility."

Thus there was another less pleasant, hard, imperious side to Perry's visit, unless THE NEW YORK TIMES exaggerates when it says that Zagreb was driven into a diplomatic corner by the renewed threat of some kind of silent sanctions, which boil down to otherwise known things: if it does not support the Federation and the Hague, Zagreb cannot count on either American economic and financial help, or on admission into the "Partnership for Peace," which, in yet another case of Croatian Pharaonic optimism, has already been declared an accomplished fact. In defending the Federation, the Italian press has accused Perry of promoting "Rambo diplomacy," while in the international assessments of the political (ab)use of the Hague, there are repeated claims that Zagreb can only be proved an American darling if, with its support for the Hague, it binds Milosevic and Izetbegovic equally.

In all this one has to benevolently understand why the republic's president has tried to soften this unpleasant Hague story by indirectly advocating some kind of overall mutual absolution in the name of some kind of coexistence between Croats and Bosniaks. As some Muslims have already arrived at that international tribunal, one could perhaps find in (particularly) Serbian lines, and (some) Bosniak lines advocates of a theory of turning a clean page, as the condition for a new beginning, one in which there is no room for the vindictive philosophy of an eye for an eye, although at two recent important international meetings it was very firmly pointed out that

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without punishing the war criminals there will never be real peace.

The first of the two meetings was organized by a famous American university, and the other took place in the United States, the upshot of which was that everything cannot be confined just to "former Yugoslavia" and Rwanda. Thus a preparation group for the establishment of a permanent international war crimes tribunal has convened and could prepare the statutes of this new international tribunal by August. Never again would it happen that, because of political considerations, the Italians and Japanese remain unpunished for the evil that some of them committed during the Second World War, nor will it depend only upon a very uncertain global balance and momentary division of international power whether or not Moscow is subjected to the very same international righteousness in the case of the unquestionable war crimes committed by some Russian soldiers in Chechnya.

Only such a global legal framework, including the verdicts the Hague court will perhaps reach, could act as a real warning to future Mladics and Karadzics. The essential thing is that honor, justice, and dignity will prevail, perhaps slowly but surely nonetheless, mainly for the sake of our own national social and mental health, in order not to have all Croats (and Muslims and Serbs) condemned for something done perhaps by only a few, while, of course, everybody remains innocent until proven guilty or confirmed innocent. This applies also in the case of Blaskic, who has already been punished by the fact that he has, perhaps entirely undeservedly, become the notorious touchstone by which one tried in vain to defend an untenable policy, before it was time for the inevitable story about truth and justice. No matter what that story looks like even in the Hague.

Croatia: Article Views Crisis in Zagreb Government

96BA0195B Zagreb HRVATSKI OBZOR in Serbo-Croatian 5 Feb 96 pp 18-19

[Article by Zelimir Zanko: "Commissioner on the Horizon"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The three-month-old crisis of government in Zagreb is once again approaching one of its culminations. As though the act already played with Granic is being replayed, after the opposition rather awkwardly (which cost it some points with the public) elected Rados its new mayor, the decision of President Tudjman is now awaited as to his confirmation or rejection. While that new uncertainty persists, the public is divided in its expectations as to what Tudjman's next move will be. There are, it is said, many factors that play indicating that Rados might be accepted: from the decline of HDZ [Croatian Democratic Union] popularity both in Zagreb and also more broadly, so that new opposition to the will of the voters and council members of the Zagreb Assembly would only pour oil on the fire, then pressure from Europe to confirm Rados, and the alleged intentions of the HDZ to play the role of the opposition in Zagreb, wearing the mantle of the socially sensitive party, making life difficult for the opposition coalition, and thereby essentially improving for the next election its repulsive image of stale officeholders who have made a good thing of the transformation. The change of direction in what up to now has been the behavior of the HDZ would, according to this scenario, be explained above all in terms of the president's reasonableness and democratic spirit because, consistent with his powers, he has rejected an unacceptable candidate and confirmed one who was acceptable.

The HDZ Is Gaining Time

On the other hand, numerous backers of the position that Rados will fare the same as Granic say that Tudjman has already found his retreat route for his negative decision in the alleged similarity of the two candidates who failed to become mayor of Zagreb,because both of them are from the same party, they have similar political views and in addition, say renegades from the HSLS [Croatian Social Liberal Party], they both worked on the debatable plan for taking power in the parliamentary crisis. What is more, it would be an illogical political move for the HDZ to relent, in spite of the pressures from the outside, because if Rados is not confirmed, the opposition loses every chance of putting in its own mayor without a new election. The victory then would, for all practical purposes, be snatched from the opposition's hands in a procedurally clean manner, so what would be the point of giving in?

Moreover, those who suggest this outcome do not see a great danger in the predictable bristling of the voters against the HDZ once again because the opposition mayor is rejected. Support for this position can be found in the successful tactics of gaining time which the HDZ-ites have used from the very beginning of the Zagreb crisis. After all, if in mid-February Tudjman, whom the law gives 14 days for his final decision on Rados following the government's recommendation, definitively rejects his confirmation, quite a bit of time will pass before the new election. Then the next move would also go to Tudjman, who would have to appoint his own mayor. In that case, the Zagreb Assembly has already announced that it will not accept Tudjman's mayor. Then would come the anticipated dissolution of

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the Assembly by the mayor, and finally the government would appoint a commissioner, who must schedule a new election within 60 days. On that basis, the new election could not be held before May, and because in procedural battles there is always something else to dispute or to halt it is more likely that the new election in Zagreb would be held only in the summer months or even in the fall, which, incidentally, is what certain leaders of the opposition are saying. And that is a fairly workable period of time for the HDZ to try by all possible means to persuade citizens that all this about the election of the mayor has been a great muddle in which the opposition has shown its inability to take power and impose its candidate for mayor.

A Growing Campaign Against the Squabbling

In its persuasion of the public, the HDZ, as it has up to now, will mostly use the line of argument that the 11-member Zagreb opposition coalition cannot last long because of its own internal contradictions. It is certain that the HDZ will also try to provoke as much as possible this interest-based Rashomon, which is acknowledged even by the braver leaders of the opposition, with moves behind the scenes which are generally accepted in politics. The trump card of the HDZ in that election is the fact that it would certainly be held along with other elections to local bodies of government. The reason for this is that in a large, loud, and expensive campaign, which under our conditions can be arranged only by the party in power, the HDZ would to some extent succeed in making relative the problem of the winter confrontations in Zagreb. They would be aided in this by not so amicable oppositionists in other cities, who even now are adding persuasiveness to the main HDZ argument that the party cannot get along, has no common program, and their sole objective is to remove the HDZ from power. As matters stand in the opposition, numerous local interests are the main and seemingly intractable obstacle to establishing a convincing and monolithic opposition coalition at all local levels which alone could oppose the HDZ. But the central headquarters of the opposition parties in Zagreb, to meet needs known only to themselves, are also making an essential contribution to the maintenance of that situation, except that by no means do they wish to admit it in public, and probably the HDZ is even now making maximum use of this to impugn the opposition.

Indeed, the very confusion that arose over fielding a new candidate for mayor of Zagreb indicates that the situation in opposition ranks is far from ideal. At this point, no small contribution to that has been made individually by the strongest opposition party, the HSLS, whose internal friction culminated just before the party's election meeting, and at one point it overflowed dangerously to the opposition as a whole. The acute crisis was overcome with Rados' election, but there are still repercussions, which indicates that it could flare up even stronger again at some point that will be inopportune for the opposition. Everything will depend upon who is elected the new HS LS president. Should it be Budisa once again, who, for all his airs before the media, has no intention of giving up the helm, and for whom the HDZ ideologues and leaders are discretely rooting, things might go along as they have up to now, that is, with the HSLS clearly independent of the rest of the opposition, with an alleged self-sufficiency, which in previous elections has already proven to be counterproductive because the voters have given extra credit for the ability to get along, as demonstrated by the five-member coalition New Assembly '95, while the Liberals were punished by losing nearly half of the seats in the Assembly they had previously.

The False and True Opposition

Of course, if things work out that way, the HSLS would move further and further away from the opposition, especially if Tudjman does not confirm Rados either. It quickly might find itself openly in the position of a so-called "constructive" opposition, as is now the function of the HSP [Croatian Rights Party]. This false opposition role, in which there actually is no desire to take power, either independently or together with the rest of the opposition, and which, when you look at the real results of HSLS policy since 1992, the Liberals have been playing very skillfully, has already been recognized in part, however, by the voters, as indicated by the outright fiasco of Budisa's team in last fall's election. One has to believe that if Budisa remains at the head of the party there will be even more such voters by the time of the next election.

That kind of HSLS turns out objectively not to be a self-styled leader of the opposition, but a real impediment to a more effective formation of an opposition coalition because many of their moves are conditioned by dreams about two-party rule of Croatia—a flight of imagination which the HDZ has, in one version or another, been successfully passing off on every opposition party which in the last five years has managed to achieve any significant support of the voters. So, many HSLS positions, which are supposedly different from the rest of the opposition on grounds of principle, especially the opposition centered around the New Assembly, should be understood in that competitive context. Because Savka's HNS [Croatian People's Party] fell at that point in 1992, when it hoped that if it did not win, it would enter into a big coalition with the HDZ, and now the

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Liberals are sinking after three years of popularity, that dream might soon be abandoned. Should that happen with all due haste, the HSLS might survive as a smaller, strictly liberal party, that is, essentially different from the present one, which is actually more like that of a cloudy movement, too similar and close to the HDZ.

Who Is Jozo Rados?

Individuals in the strongest opposition party are aware of that autistic aspect which the party's leadership imposes on the remainder of the opposition, but they are unable to make themselves felt, given Budisa's alleged charisma and indispensability, which are always and everywhere accentuated and without which, it is asserted, the HSLS would fall apart. Budisa's close associate, Rados, the new mayor of Zagreb, unfortunately seems to be a true descendant of that liberal narcissistic school of the quasi-elite political approach. As a person lacking charisma and a feel for the broad public, it is difficult to imagine him as a beloved mayor of Zagreb who communicates with even the most ordinary citizen without inhibition. By contrast with Goran Granic, he has built the image of a politician who is indeed reliable, sound, and well-informed, but a politician who stays in his office and has nothing to do with ordinary people, their aspirations and moods.

As a politician of the second or third rank who could in no case oppose any whim or movement of Budisa (whether true or simulated), and there have been quite a few of them, but who always would give him wholehearted and unstinting support, he has bound up his political destiny with Budisa to the greatest possible degree, which a politician of any stature would never allow himself. And while in the ivory tower of high-level politics he awaits Tudjman's decision, ordinary citizens of Zagreb are wondering who he is anyway. They have been given a ready answer by the HDZ-ites, who have been cleverly representing him as all but "one of their own," to be sure a Liberal, but nevertheless from Herzegovina. Never expecting such craftiness, which would demand fierce public opposition for which he has never been ready, Rados has awkwardly been trying to conceal the fact that he graduated from a military high school. When even this was exposed in the election assembly, he uttered only a few patriotic phrases, skirting the only true argument to his advantage.

If he is not confirmed, Rados can nevertheless adorn himself with the glory of being a victim who, on behalf of the overall interests of the opposition, has voluntarily put his head under the HDZ guillotine. But because of the image he has had up to now, this could only be conceived as a deliberate performance of a party task imposed by the revered Budisa.

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FYROM: Defense Minister Optimistic After Tirana Meeting

AU0204203996 Skopje MIC in English 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Summit of defense ministers of the southern Balkan countries finished in Tirana yesterday. At the news conference, the Albanian Minister of Defense Safet Zulali emphasized that this event presents a momentous gathering of the countries in the region. According to Macedonian press reports, the largest interest among the press was arisen by the U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry and the Macedonian [The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia—FYROM] Minister of Defense Blagoj Handziski.

Answering questions about the role and evaluation of the UNPREDEP [UN Preventive Deployment] mission in Macedonia, minister Handziski emphasized that the UN peacekeeping mission is carrying out its work very successfully, saying that it has demonstrated specifically that the UN forces should be used for preventive diplomacy in the future as well. He added that the UN's mandate in Macedonia ends on May 30 and that some time this month, UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali should submit a new report which, according to minister Handziski, will extend the UNPREDEP mandate another six months. The Macedonian minister underlined that this mandate should be extended until the Dayton Accord is implemented and until the Kosovo question is resolved.

Asked by the journalists how he views the relations between Macedonia and Albania, Handziski said that they are good in all fields and that there is sound understanding between the presidents Berisha and Gligorov. He emphasized that there is a numerous Albanian national minority in Macedonia, which presents a bridge of friendship between the two countries.

"I came to Tirana without any great expectations, as I feared whether we would all gather here. The biggest achievement is that the countries from the south of the Balkans, with many problems in the past, have emphasized the great desire for cooperation and peace. Today we laid the foundations for a future such meeting. A sincere desire for cooperation could be sensed at this meeting, on a bilateral plan as well as a part of the 'Partnership for Peace' initiative, and in terms of membership in NATO. I believe the neighboring countries which are not here today will also come to feel the same way. It is important that I met with President Gligorov and Prime Minister Mexi, who said that his visit to Skopje will take place by the end of this month," the Macedonian Defense Minister Blagoj Handziski stated in Tirana.

FYROM: Frckovski Signs Declaration on EFTA

AU0204075096 Skopje MIC in English 1 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister Ljubomir Frckovski signed the declaration on cooperation with the governments of the EFTA [European Free Trade Association] member-countries in Vaduz, Liechtenstein, on behalf of the Macedonian [The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia—FYROM] Government. In the name of the governments of the member-countries of EFTA, the declaration was signed by the high-ranking representatives of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Norway. The ceremony of the signing was also attended by Prince Nicholas from Liechtenstein, as well as by Ambassador Goce Petreski, Macedonia's permanent representative to the UN and Srdjan Kerim, ambassador to Liechtenstein.

On this occasion, the high-ranking representatives of the EFTA member-countries expressed satisfaction with the development of democracy in the Republic of Macedonia, as well as the results from the economic reforms.

The declaration signifies support and stimulation for closer cooperation with the Republic of Macedonia, the announcement of the Macedonian Foreign Ministry says.

As part of his stay in Liechtenstein, Minister Ljubomir Frckovski met with the Prince of Liechtenstein Nicholas, as well as the Foreign Minister Andrea Villi. In a very friendly and sincere atmosphere, the two sides exchanged opinions on the bilateral cooperation and international activities of the two countries. The Government of Liechtenstein is prepared to provide technical and financial assistances. The Macedonian Government is expected to propose concrete projects from the infrastructure, ecology, education and social sphere.

FYROM: Agreement on Cooperation With EU Expected in May

AU0204204496 Skopje MIC in English 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A Macedonian [The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia—FYROM] delegation led by Jane Miljovski, vice premier in the Macedonian Government in charge of cooperation with the EU, stayed in Brussels these days. In regard to the negotiations with the EU, Jane Miljovski said in the interview for the Macedonian Radio as follows: "I am very pleased with our team's work as it showed to be very well prepared. We had texts prepared for all the individual points we discussed in Skopje, which elaborated all our remarks. They were noted by our conversationalists.

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I believe their experts will examine them and give their own remarks based on them, and we can already sense in which direction they will go.

"As part of the setting of the export quotas, a number of visits to certain factories are planned first, to examine their capacities. Thus, as part of those technical agreements according to certain branches, there will be quite elaborated discussions. That will not be finalized with some kind of document, but with the coordination of the stances in terms of an agreement and the determination of the now already strong differences, which will be left for the next round of negotiations."

According to Minister Miljovski, the Macedonian delegation will try to coordinate its stands, and somewhere around 28 May, we can expect the last round of negotiations to take place, and eventually, the signing of an agreement on cooperation with the EU.

FYROM: OSCE Envoy, Albanians Discuss Education

AU0104181396 Zurich BOTA SOT in Albanian 29 Mar 96 p 7

[Unattributed report: "Movements Yes, But Negative"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A delegation of the People's Democratic Party [NDP—PDP in Albanian] made up of Iljaz Halimi, chairman, Bedredin Ibrahimi, secretary, and Xhevat Halili, member of the Central Presidency, held a meeting with Max van der Stoel, the high commissioner of the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe], and Tore Bog, chief of the OSCE mission in Skopje.

The OSCE high commissioner showed interest in whether in the period between his two visits to Macedonia [The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia—FYROM] anything had changed regarding the fulfillment of the Albanians' demands, particularly regarding higher education in Albanian.

The NDP representatives informed Van der Stoel that there had been changes, but in the negative sense. The Constitutional Court in Macedonia has issued a ruling declaring unconstitutional the articles of the Elementary and High Education Laws that foresee that pedagogical evidence be provided in the same language in which lessons are held. Regarding higher education, the NDP, Tetovo University Senate, and other Albanian subjects consider the legalization of Tetovo University and its financing by the state as the only alternative and stress that they will not accept any partial solutions.

Van der Stoel was briefed on the final conclusions of the Tetovo University Senate. Seeing no readiness at all on the part of Macedonian officials, Van der Stoel described this as being a step toward the formation of a parallel system, which would be harmful and would endanger peace and security in Macedonia and in the region. Regarding the preservation of peace and security in Macedonia and the region, the NDP representatives argued that the local government and international institutions must bear responsibility for this. If the preservation of peace and security is dependent on whether Tetovo University is legalized or not, then we can put forward the proposition that peace and security can be preserved with the commitment of the Albanian political subjects in implementing other goals such as the Albanians' demands [to be included as a] state-forming [people], a consensus establishment, language equality, proportional representation in state bodies, and so on and so forth. Van der Stoel undertook to intervene with the institutions of the system so that, by means of dialogue, conditions can be created to fulfill the demands of Albanians in Macedonia, the NDP communique states.

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Poland: Commentary Views Support for EU, NATO Membership

WS0204134596 Warsaw RZECZPOSPOLITA in Polish 29 Mar 96 p 6

[Commentary by Jan Skorzynski: "Time for a Referendum"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Central Europe, liberated from Soviet domination in 1989, has been knocking on the door of the West for the last several years. Although it has been decided that countries of the Visegrad Group will be admitted to the EU, the public does not always understand why it is taking so long. The acceptance of the fledgling democracies to NATO is continually put off for the unforeseeable future. The Hungarians, the Slovaks, and even the Czechs are beginning to have their doubts and wonder whether there might be an alternative to the foreign policy of Brussels. In Poland, however, Euroenthusiasm remains unwaning. The results of the poll carried out by Demoskop—and its findings are confirmed by other polls—are explicit. Not only the Spanish or the French—to say nothing of the British—but even the Germans could envy us our support for European integration and the sympathy for the institutions working to make it a fact.

One might perceive this is as overzealousness typical of the neophytes we cannot deny we are. Yet social support for integration could also be viewed as political capital. How could we cash in on it? It would be worthwhile to use it as an argument during talks with EU diplomats. It is also a very potent argument proving Poland's determination to join NATO, which is continually questioned by Moscow.

If we are to take advantage of that capital to the fullest extent—also domestically—and not squander it, we should hold a national referendum on EU and NATO membership, and the sooner the better. A positive result would be a far stronger guarantee of a pro-West Polish foreign policy than declarations made by government officials one after another. It would be binding both for Brussels and for Warsaw.

Poland: Official Says Belarusian-Russian Union No Threat

LD0204150796 Warsaw Polskie Radio First Program Network in Polish 1400 GMT 2 Apr

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Marek Siwiec, secretary of state in the Presidential Chancellery, thinks that the Belarusian-Russian Union does not constitute a threat to Polish political and economic interests. [passage omitted] Marek Siwiec said that Poland is anxious for good political and economic cooperation with our eastern neighbors:

[Begin Siwiec recording] We are interested in economic cooperation and we are pursuing it to good effect with both Belarus and Russia. If these countries take steps toward integration in the sphere of customs tariffs and head toward a certain economic union, it may be a matter of indifference to us in the worst case, and perhaps favorable. From the political point of view, the world is integrating. The only question is whether this is described as a world process—I am talking about the integration—or as the restoration of the Russian empire. We have to look very cautiously at all the facts which occur, but I believe what has taken place in Moscow is neither a political nor an economic threat. [end recording]

Poland: Ministry Wants Armed Forces Reduced by 50,000

WS0204144196 Warsaw GAZETA WYBORCZA in Polish 2 Apr 96 p 2

[Report by Pawel Wronski: "Leaving the Army; Will the Polish Armed Forces Be Reduced by 50,000 Men Over the Next Five Years?"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] *An initial plan of adapting the Polish Armed Forces to the economic capabilities of the state was approved yesterday by the leadership of the Ministry of National Defense [MON]. We learned from unofficial sources that it provides for reducing the army by some 50,000 men.*

Following the reductions stipulated by the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe agreement, the Polish Armed Forces currently number approximately 230,000 men. By the year 2005, they are to be reduced by a further 20-percent. As early as last February, Chief of the General Staff General Tadeusz Wilecki informed the Air Force would be reduced from the current 55,500 to 41,000 men. [passage omitted]

Money saved by reducing the Armed Forces will be spent by MON on purchases of new military equipment (primarily of domestic production) and pay for soldiers who remain in the Armed Forces after completing their basic military service. Approximately 30 percent of the military budget is to be spent on modernizing equipment by the beginning of the 21st century, and half of the soldiers are to be professional. The principles of drafting the military budget will be modeled after U.S. practices.

Various projects of reducing the Armed Forces have been suggested over the last two years, strongly supported by head of the National Security Office Jerzy

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Milewski. The General Staff, however, did not welcome them with enthusiasm. General Wilecki claimed that politicians wanted to have the sort of army the Four Year Sejm had suggested back in the 18th century. The General Staff has clearly changed its opinion.

The MON maintains that the new project accounts for the economic potential and the new defense strategy of Poland, thus serving the integration of the Polish Armed Forces with NATO. The draft law prepared by the MON has yet to be approved by the government and voted on by the Sejm.

Poland: French Firms Seek Cooperation With Defense Plants

WS0304065696 Warsaw SZTANDAR in Polish 2 Apr 96 p 3

[Report by Wojciech Luczak: "We Will Enter Europe in an Armored Vextra"]

[FBIS Translated Text] French defense industry managers, including representatives of such firms as Dassault Aviation, Aerospatiale, Matra, Thomson, and GIAT, have embarked on a reconnaissance mission in Poland. The Frenchmen want to convince the directors of our defense plants that they should look for the future of our defense industry not through contacts with U.S. corporations, but by integrating with Europe.

Emile Blanc, former general and a French Defense Ministry high-ranking official, stated that since 1994 Poland has had observer status in the program for constructing the French-German armored vehicle of the 21st century—the Vextra. The British, too, would like to join in the production of this vehicle. In the opinion of Blanc, Polish defense plants could participate in the establishment of a common European consortium.

It is still unknown how our decisionmakers will officially respond to these proposals. So far, the French have offered a complete package of armaments for the Polish combat helicopter Huzar [hussar], including the armor-piercing missile HOT III. It would become the basic weapon of over 100 helicopters, as well as of various types of ground troops. The French promise that 80 percent of its components would be manufactured by the Mesko plant. The producers of armor-piercing missiles from Israel, the United States, and the Republic of South Africa are also wooing our Huzar.

Poland: Walesa To Resume Work in Gdansk Shipyard

WS0204140596 Warsaw GAZETA WYBORCZA in Polish 2 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by Robert Szulc in Gdansk: "Walesa at the Shipyard; 800 Zlotys Per Month"]

[FBIS Translated Text] *Lech Walesa resumes work at the Gdansk Shipyard today. At 0630 he is to enter gate number 2, in the vicinity of the monument commemorating shipyard workers killed in December 1970.*

"Of course my husband is returning to the shipyard. It is a disgrace, but he has no choice," Danuta Walesa told GAZETA WYBORCZA. "Our state authorities have done nothing about this absurd situation (remuneration for former heads of state—ed.), and it does not seem they will in the near future. As an electrician, the former president will earn—together with a family benefit—some 800 zlotys [Z] (before taxation). The officers of the Government Security Office who protect him will earn twice as much."

In Walesa's old workshop, old wooden cabinets have been replaced with new ones made of metal. He will get the fourth locker in the second row from the window. His name, his identity number (61878) and the name of his foreman, Wojciech Zaremba, have been placed on the locker door. A freshly painted tool shelf and time clock punch card number 2 are also waiting.

It still remains unknown whether Walesa will don his working clothes and begin repairing electronic carts today. Employees returning after more than six months' leave (Walesa has been on leave since 17 April 1989) are required to take thorough examinations in the shipyard's medical center. This usually takes three days.

The return of the "great electrician" to the birthplace of "Solidarity" will be watched by nearly 150 television and radio crews and press reporters from all over the world.

As the privatization minister previously announced, today's RZECZPOSPOLITA and FINANCIAL TIMES carry an advertisement informing 60 percent of shares held by the State Treasury in the Gdansk shipyard are up for sale. The decision is due to the critical state of finances in the company. The shipyard closed the fiscal year of 1995 with a deficit of Z115 million.

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Romania: Ministry Denies Tinca's Alleged Remark on NATO

AU0104153096 Bucharest COTIDIANUL in Romanian 26 Mar 96 p 1

[Article by Cristian Rautu: "The Ministry of National Defense Notes"]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to the Press Bureau of the National Defense Ministry, the statement published in the press, according to which Defense Minister Gheorghe Tinca said that "it will not be a tragedy if Romania does not join NATO" is inexact.

Mr. Tinca's remarks were taken out of context and, consequently, the sense of the statement was radically changed. Mr. Tinca, the Romanian Government, and Romanian officials have always and unequivocally expressed the will of our country to integrate in European and North Atlantic structures.

Therefore, the denial of this policy is unfounded, and it is only the result of some malevolent interpretations.

Romania: PUNR Leaders on Possible Split With PDSR

AU0204161796 Bucharest COTIDIANUL in Romanian 25 Mar 96 p 2

[Interview with PUNR President Gheorghe Funar and Horia Pop, member of the Chamber of Deputies on behalf of the PUNR, by unidentified RADIO FREE EUROPE and BBC reporters; place and date not given: "Nastase and Funar Confront Each Other"]

[FBIS Translated Text] *The PUNR [Romanian National Unity Party] was angered by the fact that the law on the political parties allows for ethnic organizations, too, to run in the coming elections. "This law solely benefits the Gypsies and the ethnic Hungarians." The recent declaration issued in Cluj by [PUNR president] Gheorghe Funar in which he accuses their senior ally [Social Democracy Party of Romania—PDSR] of having concluded secret agreements with the UDMR [Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania], upset many people belonging to the circles in and around Cotroceni [presidential headquarters]. On 22 March in the evening, following the session of the PDSR Executive Bureau, [PDSR executive president] Adrian Nastase insisted on making a statement in front of as many television cameras as possible, saying that his party had already initiated proceedings to divorce the PUNR and is extremely well prepared to conclude cooperation with Mr. Funar's party. The PDSR Standing Delegation honestly warns Gheorghe Funar that as a consequence of his extremist declaration our country will again be accused of nationalism, which may cause incalculable impairment to Romania's international relations, as well as its image abroad. The ink on the PDSR declaration did not even have enough time to dry, and President Ion Iliescu already received a protest letter from the U.S. Congress Cooperation and Security Council, in which certain members of the ruling coalition are accused of manifestations of nationalistic nature. The divorce might take place within the next two or three weeks, said the PDSR executive president, in other words, if we may add, only after Parliament passes the budget, for which they need all the support they can get. It will result in the replacement of the four ministers and six county prefects belonging to the PUNR by persons close to the PDSR. The final decision will be made after a last PDSR-PUNR meeting, Adrian Nastase said, which on behalf of his party might be attended merely by people of their second and third echelons, as no one in the PDSR leadership wants to have anything to do with the Funar-Gavra team. Oliviu Gherman, the president of the PDSR, stated that "it is inadmissible to go on like this forever, having to put up with declarations lacking all ground, declarations, which can be termed as infamous, referring to the PDSR, when there are no grounds whatsoever, except for the presumptions of party president Mr. Funar. The communiques issued by Mr. Funar in which he accuses us of national treason are no novelty to us, as he has repeated them three or four times during the current year alone. In case he continues to display such a stance we will submit the PDSR-PUNR cooperation protocol to discussions, and if we find that the protocol has not been observed, this will naturally lead to its cancellation, its abrogation, and, implicitly, to the termination of our co-ruling." "The end of our relations with the PUNR has begun" stated Adrian Nastase while leaving from the PDSR Standing Delegation session. "The PUNR's latest actions violate the PDSR-PUNR protocol ensuring the parliamentary basis of the Vacaroiu cabinet, because lately the PUNR has been launching increasingly frequent attacks against its senior ally. The PUNR favors holding parliamentary and presidential elections separately. If this happens, the potential candidate running on behalf of the PDSR, Mr. Ion Iliescu, would not be able to engage in a campaign for our party, which would mean less votes favoring the PDSR." In a statement made to the MEDIAFAX news agency Nastase said that "the Vacaroiu cabinet does not need any support in Parliament until the general elections, because the opposition has lost interest in having the ruling team replaced." Furthermore, Mr. Nastase stated that even in the case of a no-confidence motion the Constitution would allow the current executive to carry on until the elections and that he, personally, counts on the wisdom of the political parties, as well as the negotiations that could be conducted on the draft bills forwarded to Parliament by the government.*

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[Correspondent] Is this the beginning of the end, as Mr. Nastase said? Horia Pop, a member of the Chamber of Deputies on behalf of the PUNR, believes it is not.

[Pop] One must distinguish between declarations and decisions. Personally, I do not think that this is an ultimatum, so I cannot take it as an ultimatum, because both parties have been issuing ultimatums. Sometimes we also said: look, we will leave, we will do this, do that, I do not know what. But declarations are one thing, decisions a different one.

[Correspondent] But are you determined not to abandon your coalition with the PDSR?

[Pop] It does not seem normal to me to do that before the local elections, considering especially that some people want us to do just that, and they wish this because they have been unable to penetrate Transylvania and they wish or they believe they are able to influence the results of those elections by replacing our county prefects or deputy prefects.

[Correspondent] Actually, what is at stake? Is it the Transylvanian electorate?

[Pop] The real stake for the PDSR is the Transylvanian electorate, as well as (...) the parliamentary elections drawing nearer, when they will have to account for the way they governed, which is why they would like to put the blame on us for everything.

[Correspondent] Undoubtedly, there does exist a crisis between the PDSR and the PUNR, and as the elections are drawing nearer they are increasingly becoming competitors rather than allies. However, an explanatory meeting has been scheduled in two weeks only, which comes to show that the end of the PDSR-PUNR marriage is not too close.

[Correspondent] Mr. Gheorghe Funar, what is the current stage of relations between the PUNR and the PDSR?

[Funar] These relations, in my opinion, are in concordance with the stipulations of the 1 February 1994 bilateral protocol, and I believe there are no reasons for a divorce.

[Correspondent] There are no reasons. And yet they were pointed out in the declaration recently issued by the PUNR, were they not?

[Funar] We did not raise the issue of a divorce, but rather we tried to support them, to lend a helping hand to the people in the PDSR, who are encountering trouble, and especially to make them realize that they are not well-advised to persevere in the error they have been making so far by offering support to the UDMR.

[Correspondent] Is this the sole reason for your discontent?

[Funar] Of course, because we are not followers of the idea of having parties on the basis of ethnic criteria and we regretted that those with whom we cooperate in the governing team displayed a different stance. It is their right to do so, but in my opinion, considering the coming local, parliamentary, and presidential elections, it is suicidal for the PDSR to support the existence of parties based on ethnic criteria.

[Correspondent] Your point of view, however, represents a violation of the charter on regional ethnic minorities, that is, a violation of the international conventions Romania is a signatory of. What is your opinion on this?

[Funar] You are making a mistake here, exactly as the PDSR Standing delegation did, because you disregard the fact that this document was signed just by a part of the European countries and, as far as I know, it was ratified merely by some of them, and it takes at least 12 parliaments of European countries to ratify this document before it accrues juridical value and becomes applicable in Romania, too. That is, for the time being it merely has the value of a recommendation to that effect. For us, Romanians, this convention is not compulsory.

[Correspondent] So you intend to carry on contesting the possibility of setting up political parties based on ethnic criteria?

[Funar] We are against their existence as stipulated by the bill on political parties and... the necessary number of signatures has been gathered and handed in to the Constitutional Court, before the end of the legal deadline, with respect to the law on the political parties. And we are glad that among the signatories, besides the PUNR deputies and senators, one also finds PDSR legislators.

[Correspondent] Mr. Funar, how did the PUNR receive the communique issued at the end of last week by the PDSR Standing Delegation? Among other things, that document advised the PUNR to unilaterally cancel the governing protocol.

[Funar] This communique of their standing delegation, in my opinion, was formulated in a precipitated way, under the spur of an emotional state of the persons who attended, and it is my belief that within a few dozens of hours following that moment the PDSR will tinge its stance.

[Correspondent] Did you have any contacts with the PDSR leaders to that effect?

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[Funar] There have been discussions, and they claim, including party president Nastase, that they had used different terms during the discussions in the standing delegation session, and a different sense ought to be given to the decisions made by the delegation, other than the sense that was so far communicated and circulated by the media.

[Correspondent] That is, peace will be concluded again between the PDSR and the PUNR?

[Funar] In my opinion this peace exists already and I would like to use this opportunity to thank the PDSR Standing Delegation for the efforts it makes to promote our electoral campaign.

[Correspondent] Are you perhaps afraid that if you cancel the protocol you might lose the benefits of participating in the government?

[Funar] We want to give a helping hand when the going is tough, to resolve the problems, which are so complicated.

Romania: 'Temporary' PDSR-PUNR Reconciliation Reported

AU0204182896 Bucharest EVENIMENTUL ZILEI in Romanian 29 Mar 96 p 4

[Report by Andra Aurora Manta: "It Is Not in the PDSR's Interest at the Moment To Break Relations With the PUNR"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "Our relations with the PUNR [Romanian National Unity Party] have undergone a process of erosion, which will continue in the future as well, but since we were able to wait patiently over two years, we might as well wait patiently for one more week," stated last night Adrian Nastase, executive president of the PDSR [Social Democracy Party of Romania], commenting on the current state of the relations between the two allied ruling parties.

Furthermore the PDSR leader asserted that his party "is not predominantly interested in the moment in breaking relations with the PUNR." As a matter of fact, next week the two parties are to hold a meeting at the top level.

Sources at the PDSR told our reporters that this temporary reconciliation between the two parties is due to the fact that several members of the PUNR Standing Bureau requested that a distinction should be made between [PUNR president] Gheorghe Funar and the Bucharest-headquartered leadership of that party. The PUNR leaders, however, could not be talked into making a public declaration in which they distance themselves again from Gheorghe Funar's queer communiques.

The PDSR Intends To Establish Amiable Relations With the Opposition Parties

During a meeting last night the members of the PDSR Standing Delegation decided that on the basis of their personal friendship relations with members of opposition parties they should establish amiable relations with those parties. This decision altering the PDSR's political style is intended to isolate the parties, which, in the opinion of the PDSR leaders, have launched "a dirty electoral campaign"; namely, the PD [Democratic Party] and the PRM [Greater Romania Party].

Furthermore the steering body of the ruling party debated a document elaborated by the PDSR political department, which refers to a series of nonparliamentary parties, especially parties belonging to the ethnic Gypsies, which have displayed readiness to politically cooperate, both at the national or local level, with the PDSR.

Adrian Nastase, the executive president of the PDSR, stated that his party hereby inaugurates a dialogue with parties which are not represented in Parliament, but no mergers of electoral alliances are planned. Former PUNR Deputy Cornel Brahas To Join the PDSR; Viorel Salagean, former PUNR secretary,

To Become Vice President of the PDSR Satu Mare Branch

During last night's session the PDSR Standing Delegation accepted that Cornel Brahas, a former PUNR deputy, should become a PDSR member.

Furthermore the standing delegation decided to propose to its Satu Mare branch that former PUNR Senator Viorel Salagean should become vice president of that local organization.

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Slovenia: Parliament Decision on EU Postponed

AU0204204896 Ljubljana Radio Slovenia Network in Slovene 2000 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Even today the State Chamber failed to decide under what conditions we would be willing to join the European Union. The Liberal Democracy of Slovenia and the Slovene Christian Democrats insist that the Spanish proposal, by which we would pledge to open our real estate market for foreigners, be passed. The opposition was against and maintained that a promise that we would harmonize our legislation with the European would suffice. The State Chamber split on this issue, and the opposition with obstruction created a lack of quorum and thus blocked the work of the parliament. The State Chamber will try to resume the session next Tuesday [9 April].

Slovenia: EU Parliament Chief Addresses MP's

AU0204162696 Ljubljana Radio Slovenia Network in Slovene 1330 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Klaus Hensch, president of the European Parliament, ended his visit to Slovenia today. During the visit, he met with all the most senior political representatives of Slovenia. At the beginning of the continuation of the extraordinary State Chamber session today, he also addressed the deputies. In a speech to the deputies, and then also at the conclusive news conference, Hensch also spoke about our dispute with Italy. Here is a report by Igor Juric:

[Begin recording] [Juric] Klaus Hensch said he was aware that he arrived in Ljubljana in an important moment in the middle of a very important State Chamber session. This was not his main reason for the visit, but rather the visit was a part of the dialogue between the European and Slovene Parliaments. He said that Slovenia was deeply rooted in the European space and that it met the criteria for membership in the Union to a great extent. The road to membership can, nevertheless, be quote long and the dispute with Italy will also have to be solved. This dispute was the subject of the majority of his talks with our political representatives.

Hensch said he understood the Slovene desire that this dispute be viewed as a bilateral issue. However, this is not the case. Because the voting in the Union is still taking place through the consensus, this is actually a question of relations with the Union. He described the so-called Spanish proposal as a proposal of the European Union Presidency, which now lies on the table as it is. Slovenia can either accept or reject it. Each country is free to decide what is good and what not good for it. Hensch said he was convinced that Slovenia would take the decision with the same courage and vision it had decided for independence and return to Europe five years ago. If Ljubljana rejects the Spanish proposal, this means that nothing will come out of associate membership in the Union, which means fewer contacts with the European institutions and also less influence. If Slovenia accepts it, then he expects constructive behavior from Italy.

Regarding the property legislation conditions contained in the Spanish proposal, he said:

[Hensch, in German with superimposed translation into Slovene] This is not discrimination. Every country had to resolve some special problems in the negotiations.

[Juric] To a question about the Krsko nuclear power plant, he replied that this would definitely be discussed in the continuation of the negotiations on full-fledged membership between Slovenia and the European Union. The union's stance on this issue will greatly depend on the Union's energy policy at the time. [end recording]

Slovenia: State Chamber Debates Foreign Relations

AU0204171696 Ljubljana Radio Slovenia Network in Slovene 1330 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today the State Chamber is continuing the extraordinary session on foreign policy. The debate has entered its fifth day. The deputies are voting on two documents today: the foreign policy guidelines — the proposal has already been adopted and is about to enter into the second round of discussion — and a proposal of the platform and conclusions on relations with the European Union, Italy, and NATO. The deputies will vote on the appendices adopted at the Friday [29 March] session of the parliamentary commission for international relations. Nadja Pengov reports:

[Begin recording] [Pengov] The debate is again highly polemic. The issues that divided the opposition and the ruling parties remain unchanged. The deputies are returning to the dilemmas that were present at the end of last week. Dominating them is, of course, the Spanish proposal. To recall, the deputies of the government parties support it, while the opposition is against it.

There were a lot of accusations today. Zmago Jelincic [Slovene National Party] wonders whose interests the deputy of the Italian minority, who favors the Spanish compromise, actually advocates. Democrat Tone Persak is convinced that the proposal equals self-humiliation. Miran Potrc from the United List of Social Democrats is against the special conditions that the proposal spells out for Slovenia. As he said, the government parties have put Slovenia into a situation where it lacks a clear platform. He is enraged that:

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[Potrc] A price in cadre had to be paid for this consolidation of the Slovene national interest, which these two parties claim it represents.

[Pengov] And the price is a proposal that Christian Democrat Miroslav Mozetic be appointed the president of the committee for international relations. Mozetic says:

[Potrc] I expected that the price would be the foreign minister, I mean, this is a very low price.

[Pengov] Franc Zagozen, the People's Party:

[Zagozen] The government coalition evidently espouses the goals of the Italian state in this case.

[Pengov] He does not wish to take part in such a decision. He wonders what he will do in the State Chamber after it is passed. Vitodrag Pukl from the Social Democratic Party, too, is of the opinion that the Spanish proposal is humiliating.

Lojze Peterle, however, maintains that Slovenia is running late. The time has come to end the foot-dragging. Time does not work for us:

[Peterle] Our running late is definitely pushing us from the central European category into the Yugo category, and I maintain that this is not good for us.

[Pengov] Janez Kocijancic from the United List reproaches the foreign ministers and the prime minister of this government for blundering in negotiations with the European Union and now transferring the decision to the parliament. [end recording]

Slovenia: SKD To Support No-Confidence Vote in Thaler

AU0204150496 Ljubljana DELO in Slovene 30 Mar 96 p 2

[Report by Grega Repovz: "SKD Will Support Interpellation Against Minister Thaler"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kamnik, 29 Mar — "If in relations with Italy Foreign Minister Zoran Thaler displays only 1 percent of the arrogance that the deputies had the privilege to witness in the State Chamber, Slovenia will be in a bad way if he remains foreign minister," Lojze Peterle, president of the Slovene Christian Democrats, said at the news conference today. As a result of Thaler's address to the parliament, which, according to Peterle, was not coordinated either with the prime minister or with the Christian Democrats, the party has decided to support the interpellation against Zoran Thaler. [passage omitted]

Slovenia: Defense Ministry Denies Plans To Buy F-16's

AU0204171796 Ljubljana DELO in Slovene 29 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by V.V.: "We Will Not Buy Fighter Planes"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Ljubljana, 28 Mar — The Ministry of Defense today denied the alleged purchase of F-16 aircraft. Within the program on realization of the law on the securing of funds for the realization of the fundamental development programs of the defense forces of the Republic of Slovenia in the years 1994 to 2003, the purchase of fighter planes is not envisaged for this year. The Dayton agreement, in Annex 1B, envisages a gradual lifting of the embargo on arms and military equipment. The export of military aircraft to Slovenia is still not permitted, it is stated, among other things, in the ministry announcement. [passage omitted]

Slovenia: Commission Exonerates SOVA in F-16 Affair

AU0204190096 Ljubljana Radio Slovenia Network in Slovene 1700 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The government ministerial troika, consisting of [Justice Minister] Meta Zupancic, [Interior Minister] Andrej Ster, and [Legislation Minister] Lojze Janko today studied the contents and the purpose of a lecture by Drago Fers, chief of the Slovene Security Information Service [SOVA], and studied the problems surrounding the publication of an alleged SOVA document in MAG weekly. The members of the commission concluded in both cases that the chief of SOVA did not overstep his duties and authority and that SOVA did not follow up the alleged purchase of F-16 aircraft.

It is written in the statement for the public that monitoring of this subject does not fall within SOVA's authority but is the responsibility of different services. The members of the commission also became acquainted with the expert opinion of the center for criminal investigation. The expert opinion concluded beyond any doubt that the published document regarding the activities of foreign services and the alleged purchase of the supersonic aircraft was not compiled by SOVA.

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Federal

FRY: Hague Upholds Ruling on FRY as 'Criminal State'

AU0304101996 Paris AFP in English 0959 GMT 3 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Hague, April 3 (AFP)—The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia on Wednesday [3 April] upheld a ruling by its deputy prosecutor that branded the rump Yugoslavia as a "criminal" state.

The tribunal asked its top prosecutor, Judge Antonio Cassese, to inform the UN Security Council of the ruling linked to Belgrade's refusal to cooperate with the tribunal, in breach of its undertakings to the international community.

Deputy prosecutor Clint Williamson last Thursday branded the rump Yugolsavia (Serbia and Montenegro) a "criminal" state because it was aiding indicted war criminals.

"When a government gives refuge and support to criminals, in the eyes of the world that government then too becomes criminal," he said. "And that is exactly what the Belgrade government has done in this case."

Williamson asked the tribunal to confirm the charges against three former officers in the federal Yugoslav National Army accused of atrocities during the bloody break up of the former Yugoslavia.

Williamson said the three—Colonel Mile Mrskic, Captain Miroslav Radic, and Major Veselin Sljivancanin—were "cowards and criminals" for their alleged involvement in the massacre of patients from Vukovar hospital, murdered after the town fell to Serb forces in November 1991.

They are accused of dragging patients from their hospital beds and beating them mercilessly over several hours before killing them in cold blood.

"After Vukovar, the government gave them commendations and promotions," he said, adding that at least one of them, Sljivancanin, was still a serving officer in the Yugoslav army "with an obligation to obey orders given to him by that government."

FRY: TANJUG Official on Relations With State

AU0204135096 Belgrade BORBA in Serbo-Croatian 1 Apr 96 p 9

[Interview with Vlada Resetar, deputy editor in chief of TANJUG, by Dragica Lukic; place and date not given: "There Is No Free Lunch"]

[FBIS Translated Text] *According to our information, TANJUG is one of the agencies that receive very little from the state. REUTER, for instance, receives 30 percent of its funding from the state. Last year, less that 20 percent of TANJUG's income came from the state, while this year we are counting on the state providing approximately one-third of our income. The second third should come from the users of our services and other materials. The remaining part of our income should be provided through our cooperation with business firms, with the nature of our relationship being altered from that of sponsorship into that of partnership. Thus, we shall make an irreversible step toward a certain kind of transformation of TANJUG, toward a different kind of ownership: a mixed one.*

Anyway, thanks to sponsorship we have preserved our global network of correspondents and really saved the agency from the colonial influence of major foreign agencies, which have entered the market in all the countries of the former communist block during the past few years and now are trying to enter our market, too. Thanks to our well-developed network of correspondents, we have always had our authentic information from all over the world, and we have never been forced—like certain agencies from the neighboring countries—to rely much on the services of great world agencies.

[Lukic] How much is the editorial policy influenced by whoever financially supports the news agency?

[Resetar] As the Federation is the founder and the majority owner of TANJUG, it is natural for the federal government to have a certain impact on the editorial policy. The impact is carried out through the Federation-appointed Administrative Board, which reports on how the editorial policy —determined by the director, in cooperation with editor in chief, and approved of by the Administrative Board—is implemented.

The fact that TANJUG, as a state agency, represents the interests of the state and interprets the state policy, does not mean that TANJUG does not have a critical approach to the actions of the federal administration, which—as any administration—tends to "fall asleep." Still, TANJUG does not try to do that by "poking its finger into the eye" of the federal government, but rather by pointing out problems and their possible solutions.

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[Lukic] What do you think about supporting the media from abroad?

[Resetar] I think that an old rule from economics is valid in the area of media: "There is no free lunch." Those from abroad who give money know very well why they are giving it—and those who accept the money must earn it in a way. In my opinion, there is always something fishy about it, something that includes doing favors of a subversive nature or at least aimed against the ruling party.

[Lukic] Does independent journalism exist?

[Resetar] I think that is a pompous platitude fabricated here to blur the essence of the problem. The essence is that in our country, just like everywhere else in the world, there are pro-government media and there are opposition media. No one is trying to hide that abroad; for instance, extremely right-oriented newspapers are proud of being rightist because that is their political position.

[Lukic] Then, why are there media in our country that call themselves "independent?"

[Resetar] That sounds quite nice, that sounds democratic, very modern, especially if you use the label "pro-regime" for other media. That is a usual way to manipulate the public, to manipulate the readership. This really amounts to covering up the truth, which is linking media to one or more opposition parties. You are aware that Studio B, which called itself "independent television," really was an opposition television station.

[Lukic] Has TANJUG had any offers of financial support from abroad during the past few years of crisis?

[Resetar] We have not been offered anything, nor have we accepted anything, because such help always implies that you have to do something to return the favor. For instance, we have a reporter in Brussels who must be the last journalist in the EU palace or NATO palace working on a typewriter—he has not even been supplied with equipment for his normal work.

[Box, p 9]

They Represent the Interests of Their Country

"There is not a single agency that does not in a way reflect the policy of the state it is supported by to a certain degree. Even the great agencies abroad—that normally declare themselves neutral, independent, or unbiased—pay a lot of attention to whether they would offend their country with a certain text, and they always try to fully represent their country's interests. We have a regular insight into that, and it goes for every single agency"—says Vlada Resetar, TANJUG.

[Box, p 9]

The Newspaper That Takes Sides

"I have a newspaper here on my desk with an article about our officers' trial in The Hague, and it says: 'Hearing of Witnesses Who Survived Ovcara Massacre.' This is the title of the text. So, the title itself suggests that it was a massacre—and the text is about a trial that could end with the acquittal of the accused. The title implies that there was a massacre. That it not something a newspaper should state. That is not a journalist's job. That is the judges' job, and the judges should be unbiased. This newspaper has taken over a role that does not suit it. That means the newspaper has in a way taken sides.

"The media's actions and the way these actions are carried out show who gives them money and why," says Vlada Resetar, TANJUG.

Serbia

Serbia: Milosevic, U.S. Official Discuss Peace Plan

LD0204212396 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 2152 GMT 2 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Belgrade, 2 Apr (TANJUG)—Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic this evening received U.S. Acting Assistant Secretary of State John Kornblum, who arrived in Belgrade accompanied by his aides.

They examined the most important issues of the current political situation in the region, development of bilateral relations and cooperation between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the United States. They concluded that the peace plan was being implemented successfully in the areas previously engulfed in hostilities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and that the process of strengthening peace and consolidating the situation in the Balkan region were following a stable course.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will continue to make its utmost contribution to the strengthening of peace and equality in relations between nations and states, advancing multifaceted cooperation with international partners in the mutual interest.

The talks were also attended by Yugoslav Minister of Foreign Affairs Milan Milutinovic.

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Serbia: U.S. Envoy Criticized Over Serb Rights in Croatia

AU0204154896 Belgrade VECERNJE NOVOSTI in Serbo-Croatian 2 Apr 96 p 2

[Commentary by Milenko Predragovic: "Hypocrisy as a Stake"]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Ambassador to Zagreb Peter Galbraith—or better said, the secret governor of Croatia—recently visited the headquarters of the Croatian Helsinki Committee and on that occasion wished "success in the struggle for human rights" to the workers in this institution, stressing that his government appreciated "the respect of human rights in Croatia."

Peter Galbraith is a small ambassador in a small country, but his hypocrisy when it comes to the state of human rights in Croatia exceeds all the boundaries of good taste. First of all, his government never did anything to protect the Serb human rights in Croatia. With its logistics (and weapons), it contributed to the expulsion of 700,000 Serbs from Croatia. With the U.S. help, almost all the western Serbs have been expelled in a terrifying exodus. The Americans never said a single word about that.

This is not a phrase but an eyewitness report: When in August last year the Croats stoned the convoys of Serb refugees in an organized way near Sisak, Peter Galbraith sat on one tractor and wagged his finger at the mob not to throw stones at the helpless old folk. Peter Galbraith did not stop that miserable convoy and tell Franjo Tudjman that all the people should return to their homes under full safety. Galbraith only made sure that the fleeing went on unobstructed!

Now in Krajina, where every second Serb who remained in his home has been killed, the Croats are digging over mass graves and hiding the traces of their crimes. Galbraith is silent about this. And while Peter Galbraith was amusing the members of the Croatian Helsinki Commission with his hypocritical story about his administration following all the developments connected to human rights in Croatia, U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry was signing documents on military cooperation between the United States and Croatia!

Peter Galbraith might not be aware of the fact that his own administration is sacrificing him publicly for its uncertain goals. The Balkans are not a south American jungle but the cradle of civilization. In that cradle, one can fool an occasional senile old man, but in Europe all people, all of them, stand upright.

Serbia: B-H Federation Delegation Visits Zlatibor POW Camp

AU0204183996 Belgrade RTB Television Network in Serbo-Croatian 1830 GMT 2 Apr 96

[Report by Branko Stankovic]

[FBIS Translated Text] A delegation of the government of the Muslim-Croatian Federation, headed by Amor Masovic, visited Branjevacko Polje reception center on Zlatibor today, in which the members of the Muslim armed forces who had fled Zepa have been situated since August 1995. Out of altogether 800 escaped members of the Muslim army, who crossed into the FRY illegally and surrendered themselves to the Yugoslav Army, there are currently 276 men in this reception center. The rest have left for America, Australia, and European countries.

On the spot, in direct contact with the escaped men, the delegation of the Muslim-Croatian Federation that arrived from Sarajevo today had the chance to inspect the treatment of its soldiers in Branjevacko Polje reception center. Since their arrival the Yugoslav authorities have offered them full assistance, such as medical care, accommodation, and food, which they themselves confirmed to this delegation that conveyed to them the regards of Alija Izetbegovic and passed on their families' letters.

Tonight and tomorrow the delegation of the Muslim-Croatian Federation will speak with each Muslim who fled from Zepa individually on whether they want to return to Bosnia-Herzegovina or go abroad. They were told that no criminal procedures were instigated against any of them and that if they chose to return to the Muslim-Croatian Federation they will enjoy full protection of the international forces and the Implementation Force during the transfer.

Kosovo

Kosovo: Exit Visas Said Not Needed on Albanian Border

AU0204201696 Pristina KOSOVA DAILY REPORT in English 2 Apr 96

["Exit Visa Requirement Suspended at the Kosova-Albanian Border?"—KOSOVA DAILY REPORT headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Those wishing to travel to Albania via the Vermica border crossing point between Kosova and Albania had the opportunity yesterday (Monday) [1 April] to do that without an exit visa from the "Yugoslav" authorities for the first time in fifteen years, the BUJKU newspaper reported today (Tuesday).

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The exit visa requirement has been in place since 1981, effectively preventing Kosova Albanians from visiting their fellow ethnics in Albania. The Government of the self-proclaimed Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) revoked the exit visa regime in mid-March, to only say a fortnight later the revocation would come into force on 30 April 1996, eight days after it would have appeared in the 22 April issue of the OFFICIAL GAZETTE.

It is yet to be seen whether the Serbian authorities have decided to bring the date of revocation of the exit visa forward.

The BUJKU newspaper said its correspondent in Prizren, Fatmir Pireci, was among those who passed the border and visited the town of Kukes in Albania yesterday.

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